



**A New Form of Peer Feedback Technique: An Investigation
into the Impact of Focusing Saudi ESL Learners on Macro
Level Writing Features.**

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Abstract

Although many researchers have explored the use of Peer Feedback (PF) in writing (e.g., Hu & Lam, 2010), several have reported concerns with this technique, such as a tendency to shift most of the attention to micro features (e.g., mechanics, vocabulary) while giving little attention to macro features such as organisation and coherence (e.g., Van Steendam et al., 2010), even though macro features can be argued to be a highly important aspect of good writing (Truscott, 1996). This is one of the factors that have led researchers (e.g., Gielen et al., 2010b) to propose forms of this technique in which emphasis is placed on particular aspects of the PF process. This study introduces one such form of PF technique which requires learners to focus on macro features in writing and the teacher to focus on micro features, in order to give learners more time to critique essays at a macro level while receiving micro level FB from a reliable source. The study investigates the impact of the introduced form on: learners' motivation to use PF and to learn writing; learners' attitudes towards PF and towards writing; learners' linguistic progress, and learners' preference for giving and receiving macro and/or micro level feedback when practising PF technique. The research was conducted on 41 Saudi Arabian undergraduate students in their final year of an English degree course. An action research approach was adopted using a one-group design, with the PF activities divided into two consecutive phases. During the first phase, subjects practised the conventional use (i.e, providing PF on macro and micro features) of this technique (T1), while during the second phase they practised the new form of the technique (T2). The data were gathered over 15 weeks from pre-, mid- and post-tests; pre-, mid- and post-questionnaires; mid- and post-interviews; field notes; documentary evidence, and recording of several verbal protocol sessions.

The findings suggest that both treatments can have a significant impact on the overall quality of learners' writing, with the second treatment resulting in significantly better quality. Despite these findings, the learners showed a strong preference for conventional PF, suggesting they have difficulty in accepting the prohibition from providing PF on micro features owing to a negative transfer effect from their previous experience of approaches to teaching writing, which placed a great emphasis on the importance of micro features. It is likely that this transfer effect may be found in other contexts with a similar approach to teaching writing; further research is needed in order to test this hypothesis. In addition, in this study, the participants did not have the chance to see how much better they performed in their post-test, which raises the question of whether or not their views would have changed if they had.

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List of Abbreviations

ECLS	School of Education, Communication & Language Sciences (Newcastle University)
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
FB	Feedback
L1	First language
L2	Second language
<i>M</i>	Mean
<i>N</i>	Sample size
N/A	Not Available
PF	Peer Feedback
PhD	Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
<i>p</i>-value	A value of probability, by which the statistical significance of a test can be determined
<i>SD</i>	Standard Deviation
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
T1	The first treatment
T2	The second treatment
<i>t</i>-distribution	A probability distribution which calculates the probability of whether or not two scores are statistically different.
US	United States
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development
<i>Z</i>-score	A value that describes how many standard deviations each score is away from the mean.

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction and study area

Collaborative learning has been given increasing attention in recent years (e.g., McWham et al., 2003; Liu & Carless, 2006; Van der Pol, 2008; Grami, 2010; Strijbos et al., 2010; Albeshier, 2011; Zheng, 2012). In its broadest context, collaborative learning can be described as “...a situation in which two or more people learn or attempt to learn something together” (Dillenbourg, 1999: 1). Its wide acceptance in higher education is a result of the need for a shift from teacher-centred to student-centred classrooms, in that a student-centred environment is considered essential for establishing active learning situations that can help to enhance learning outcomes (Orsmond et al., 2002).

Collaborative writing — which involves collaboration between student-writers — is widely recognised as a central component of classroom learning by researchers in the field of second language writing (e.g. Wells et al., 1990; Chenoweth & Hayes, 2001; Lundstrom & Baker, 2009; Hu & Lam, 2010). Peer feedback (PF), a technique whereby students provide comments to their colleagues regarding the quality of their work, is generally categorised as a collaborative learning technique (Van der Pol, 2008), and is frequently employed in ESL writing classrooms. From a socio-cognitive perspective, it can be seen as “...a formative developmental process that gives writers the opportunities to discuss their texts and discover others’ interpretations of them” (Hyland & Hyland, 2006a: 6). Several researchers maintain that it is the technique of

using feedback from sources other than the teacher which enables learners to improve their learning and helps them develop metacognitive strategies (e.g., MacArthur, 2007; Cho & Macarthur, 2010).

The positive impact of PF in educational contexts justifies the extensive research carried out in recent years. Empirical studies have demonstrated positive impact on various aspects of learning, including: its impact on learning and its effect on encouraging lifelong learning (Cassidy, 2007; Tan, 2008); its promotion of critical thinking among learners, which is known to be crucial in higher educational contexts and in writing in particular (Lockhart & Ng, 1995; Paulus, 1999; Lundstrom & Baker, 2009), and its encouragement of learners in higher education to engage deeply in the class by reflecting on one another's work (Strijobs, Narciss & Dunnebie, 2010).

1.2 The context of the study and statement of the problem

Broadly speaking, writing in Arabic in the Saudi culture is being encouraged by some governmental organisations, such as the Ministry of Culture and Information. However, although people are being encouraged to write, large numbers of the Saudi population do not seem to take any interest in mastering writing skills or even see it as an essential component of their lives. One possible reason for this is that throughout pre-university stages the teaching of writing is given only minor emphasis (1-2 sessions a week are allocated for teaching writing, a session being 45 minutes long), while the teaching mainly involves how to produce descriptive and/or narrative texts. At the university stage, writing is likely to be taught at no more than two levels for non-language learning programmes, during which time it is taught for no more than 2-3 hours a week. Unfortunately, learners may not be introduced to argumentative

writing until they reach this stage. Moreover, when Saudi students are learning to write in their L1, as well as in L2, they do not expect to have to assume aspects of the teacher's role, which is something they are likely to experience through the introduction of techniques such as the PF technique. Therefore, it can be said that the provision of feedback is seen as the teacher's role and when it is given, it typically only tackles aspects related to micro level features.

Despite the enormous variety of approaches to language teaching which have been developed over the centuries, and despite the quite widely accepted developments in language teaching that have taken place over the last 20 or 30 years, it is believed by some researchers that these developments have not received widespread acceptance among ESL teachers in Saudi Arabia (e.g., Alshami, 1994; Vassall-Fall, 2011). According to Roberts (2003), some educators in higher education have resisted adopting collaborative learning techniques, for example, because it is easier to use already existing practices than to introduce new approaches. From my own point of view, I believe that this lack of acceptance (through lack of understanding and/or genuine difficulty in introducing change) of more recent approaches to language teaching is one of the reasons why the difficulties that Saudi learners have with English have not been effectively dealt with in secondary, and particularly higher education. I believe that this lack of acceptance of recent approaches may be the cause of difficulties EFL and ESL students experience when trying to learn writing skills in particular. With regard to writing difficulty, AbuSeileek (2006) carried out a study in the same context as the current study and concluded that Saudi students find writing to be the most 'problematic' of all language skills; additionally, Alhazmi and Schofield (2007) discuss the likelihood that Saudi ESL undergraduate students in the third year of a four-year programme will encounter difficulties with various aspects of writing, such as essay organisation, unity and grammar. They further suggest that this problem

is a result of the dominance of traditional approaches in teaching. The following section highlights how traditional approaches may affect learning in general and ESL writing in particular.

1.2.1 Traditional approaches and the Saudi context

Traditional classrooms usually adopt well-tried traditional approaches such as the grammar-translation method and the lecture-based approach. These two approaches are widely used in the Saudi higher educational context (Alshami, 1994; Alsubahi & Banjer, 1997; Saada, 1998; Vassall-Fall, 2011), and such traditional methods do appear to be dominant in Saudi classrooms (Alhazmi & Schofield, 2007). The grammar-translation method is a method that centres the teaching and learning activities in the classroom around the teaching of grammar and the practice of translation. It focuses mainly on reading and writing, with minor attention given to speaking and listening skills, and prioritizes accuracy and the construction of correct sentences (Griffiths & Parr, 2001). On the other hand, Rashid (1988) describes the lecture-based method in Saudi higher education as follows:

“The lecture-based method is considered the direct way for university teachers to impart information and experiences to students. It is characterised in the context of teaching and learning by human communication in one direction...” (p: 102).

Alajmi (2003), for example, found that male Saudi teachers in Saudi higher education have a preference for the traditional lecture-based approach, believing that it is the most informative method that has the greatest impact on improving learning and teaching at an undergraduate level. It may be said that this preference for the lecture-based approach can be linked to teachers’ resistance to adopting new approaches in

their teaching, even though knowledge of new approaches to language teaching can be easily attained through free access to scientific E-journals and libraries.

According to Saraceni (2008), traditional methods have been heavily criticised owing to the fact that they do not tend to develop learners' communicative skills. Writing is a method of communicating with the intended audience, and in order for the message to be conveyed, learners have to be equipped with a communicative ability sufficient to enable them to deliver a message with clarity and which is of high quality in terms of meaning. However, since it is most likely that Saudi ESL learners will be taught by an academic who merely 'lectures' on, for example, how to write an essay, and who may or may not require the learners to perform any individual follow-up activities, they may not be exposed to effective learning strategies, such as collaborative learning. As a result, learners may not benefit as much from the learning process as their teachers expect them to. One of the factors that encourages practitioners to utilise collaborative learning in writing is the fact that it facilitates communication between student writers. Taking into account Saraceni's (2008) emphasis on the importance of equipping students with the ability to communicate fluently and effectively, it is suggested that effective communication between learners may lead to better performance of a particular task (Galegher & Kraut, 1992).

In traditional classrooms, the teacher is the controller of the learning environment, and thus learning takes place in a teacher-centred environment. The role of traditional teachers is therefore to transmit knowledge, with the learners acting as passive recipients of this knowledge (Littlewood, 1984; Kohonen, 1992). Kohonen (1992: 31) describes the characteristics of traditional models according to a number of different classroom learning dimensions. These are shown in table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1 Characteristics of traditional models

Dimension	Traditional model
View of learning	Transmission of knowledge
Power relations	Emphasis on teacher's authority
Teacher's role	Providing mainly frontal instruction; professionalism as individual autonomy
Learner's role	Relatively passive recipient of information; mainly individual work
View of knowledge	Presented as 'certain'; application, problem-solving
View of curriculum	Static; hierarchical grading of subject matter, predefined content
Learning experiences	Knowledge of facts, concepts and skills; focus on content and product
Control of process	Mainly teacher-structured learning
Motivation	Mainly extrinsic
Evaluation	Product-oriented: achievement testing; criterion-referencing (and norm-referencing)

With regard to writing instruction, Shih (1986: 625) says that, "Traditional composition courses have often fallen short in helping ESL students to develop the skills needed to handle real academic writing tasks". In addition, Jong (2009) explains that traditional writing classrooms have developed the perspective that writing is a solitary and silent activity. As a result, traditional classrooms can exhibit various disadvantages. For example, when we think of traditional classrooms, we tend to think of classes containing large numbers of learners who are listening to their teacher and waiting for his/her instructions to perform an individual task. Thus, it can be said that these traditional classes are classes taught by one teacher, in which all learners share the *same single* source of information. Sharing a single source of knowledge can be disadvantageous to learners from a number of different perspectives. For example, learners are not likely to be offered *one-to-one* attention, despite the fact that they may be at different levels of proficiency, have different learning styles, or even have particular learning difficulties. In addition, it can be difficult in such classes to ensure that learners are really listening to what is being taught. With respect to the Saudi

context, writing teachers are likely to be assigned to teach writing to a total of over 100 students in one academic term. Therefore, one teacher may not be able to provide his/her learners with the individual attention they need owing to the genuine difficulty of doing so in such a situation.

Other significant problems can also be found in the Saudi teaching system. For instance, classroom feedback on writing can be described as *rare* or *scarce*, as learners receive very little feedback on their performance. For example, when learners submit an essay as part of their writing skills assessment, they are likely to receive merely written marks (summative¹ feedback) on the front sheet, and no feedback at all describing the strengths and weaknesses (formative² feedback) of their work. In this respect, Zheng (2012) explains that teachers always feel pressurised about providing feedback for their students on their written work — i.e., in that they want to do it but find it imposes a heavy workload on them — owing to the complex nature of students' mistakes and the large number of students. Therefore, learners in the Saudi context usually have very limited experience of feedback, although feedback is very important for learning, as discussed in chapter 2.

As this tends to be typical of the Saudi context, one side-effect that is likely to be seen is that learners may not be motivated to become involved or even active in the learning process; also, negative attitudes towards learning can be seen. Perhaps the overall approach to writing is one of the causes of genuine difficulty for learners in the Saudi context; this would concur with the view of AbuSeileek (2006) and Alhazmi and Schofield (2007), who reported that writing in English is a skill found difficult by undergraduate Saudi ESL learners, and suggest that traditional teaching is to blame.

¹ Summative assessment is assessment that summarises/measures learners' learning at the end of an instructional unit.

² Formative assessment is assessment in which the aim is to gather feedback on learners' learning while learning is ongoing, in order to improve the process of learning.

I too believe that this can be linked to the dominance of traditional approaches in teaching writing. As an English language teacher, it is my duty to help the learners for whom I am responsible to overcome such difficulty in writing by introducing the concept of collaborative learning in the form of PF technique. Introducing this concept can cause the atmosphere of writing classroom activities to change from being ‘silent’, a criticism made by Jong (2009), to becoming more ‘active’ and ‘engaging.’

1.2.2 Why PF in particular?

From a previous experience of introducing self-assessment — a technique in which learners assess their own performance — to the same context, it can be predicted that such a new approach might attract learners’ interest. In brief, self-assessment was introduced with regard to a language skill in a Saudi higher educational context (Alnasser, 2009). Not only did the subjects of the study enjoy it, but even students from other classes were chatting about this *new* experience. This is one of the factors that encouraged my belief that investigating this area could help to bring about a change to the current situation.

The literature offers a number of collaborative learning techniques, such as Group Writing (in which learners work together in order to complete a written task), Reciprocal Teaching (in which learners teach one another in groups) and PF technique. In this study PF was selected from among other techniques owing to the fact that it possesses the characteristics that are likely to tackle most of the problems encountered by Saudi learners. As defined earlier, PF is a process by which students assess the quality of and comment on other students’ work and provide feedback (Berg et al., 2006), which suggests ways of solving the encountered problems for several reasons. For example, learners can have more frequent *one-to-one tutoring*, where they share knowledge and experiences through giving and receiving feedback (i.e., through

interaction); the result of this is that they can receive an increased amount of individual attention (Berg et al., 2006). This will, in principle, compensate for the *lack of feedback* provided by the teacher and satisfy both the teacher and his/her students. Moreover, the learning process will shift from being *teacher-centred* to becoming *student-centred*. Trigwell et al. (1999) emphasise the importance of including student-focused approaches in teaching in order to improve the quality of student learning.

If PF appeared to be effective in tackling the problem of learning English writing, then perhaps similar collaborative techniques might be considered in tackling other language learning problems, in both the Saudi and other contexts. Additionally, teachers in the Saudi context might be encouraged to utilise not only this technique, but also other collaborative learning techniques.

1.2.3 What criticisms are there concerning the current use of PF?

An examination of the literature leads to the conclusion that there are several drawbacks to the way in which conventional peer feedback is presented in ESL writing classrooms that may be jeopardising its effectiveness. For example, several studies (e.g., Broekkamp & Van den Bergh, 1996; Truscott, 1999; Chenoweth & Hayes, 2001; Van Steendam et al., 2010) have reported a tendency on the part of learners during PF sessions to pay more attention to micro level — i.e., surface level features such as grammar and proper use of vocabulary — than to macro level features — i.e., meaning level features such as idea development and the organisation of a written text. The result of this tendency may be that learners are not equipped with the ability to write effectively at the macro level, in that they may express their thoughts poorly, even if they possess adequate linguistic skills; consequently, their learning of the knowledge they need for advanced writing courses may be hindered.

Furthermore, Zheng (2012: 115) concluded that in PF sessions learners can act as

passive participants (in that they tend to take a “...peripheral role, whose discourse is far from reaching a solution to the problem, assuming less important responsibility”), and thus they may not benefit properly from this technique. In this case, learners may not realise the importance of such techniques, and thus may develop negative attitudes towards PF and not feel motivated to participate fully in giving and receiving feedback. Moreover, some studies suggest that learners do not accept most of the feedback offered by their peers, and Min’s (2006: 133) study found that an average of only 39% of such feedback was accepted at both macro and micro levels, arguing that this is the result of learners producing poor quality PF.

In addition, a recent study conducted by Zhao (2010) reports that learners were more likely to accept feedback provided by their teacher than by their peers, and that this is not surprising, since most of the existing studies on peer feedback in writing in ESL and EFL contexts have reported that teacher feedback was more frequently incorporated in revised drafts than was peer feedback. Various reasons for this acceptance of teacher feedback rather than PF are given: for instance, students consider teacher feedback to be more trustworthy and professional (Yang et al., 2006), and to be more significant and more useful (Tsui & Ng, 2000). This could be one of the reasons that have led researchers to conduct a series of studies in which they have attempted to increase learners’ acceptance of PF by training learners in how to provide PF (e.g., Min, 2005; 2006; 2008).

It may be surmised that these weak points of the conventional PF may cause it to fail to be very effective in writing classrooms, and overcoming these weaknesses could increase our understanding of and give us deeper insights into the entire PF process.

1.2.4 What is new about PF in this study?

In recent years, researchers have made several attempts to enhance the use of the technique and overcome its weaknesses in order to produce better outcomes in the learning process. This study, for instance, attempts to learn how the practice of PF can be used in an optimal way in a Saudi context in order to make the learning process more efficient. In other words, the intention was to improve learners' overall writing quality and to improve their understanding of what writing involves (i.e., raising writing awareness). It is hoped that this will enrich the literature through the introduction of carefully designed techniques for using PF, which could add genuine value to the peer feedback process.

In more detail, this study introduces a new form of PF with the aim of developing positive attitudes and better motivation in terms of its use. Additionally, the aim was to develop positive attitudes towards learning writing among students, which may lead to more effective learning of English in general. The new suggested form of PF differs from the conventional/traditional PF in that it forces learners to give feedback based on the *macro* level features of writing and reserves the provision of *micro* level feedback for the teacher alone.

The design of the new form was inspired by the fact that learners are likely to become preoccupied with micro level features when they provide feedback to one another, the principal result of which is the neglecting of more important writing features, i.e., the macro level features (Van Steendam et al., 2010). In addition, Ferris (2004) concludes that students are likely to be less capable of self-editing lexical errors, and thus teachers may need to employ a variety of treatments (e.g., including other sources of FB); however, several studies have shown that learners have a preference for receiving micro FB on their written work (e.g., Leki, 1991; Ferris, 2004). It was therefore decided that in the intervention for this research, the students would be forbidden from

providing *micro* PF to their fellow students and that teacher *micro* FB would be included as an integral part of the new form. It was thought that if the participants received micro FB from a reliable source (i.e., the teacher), they would have more exposure to and thus acquire more knowledge of macro features. This may also allow the learners to have more confidence in macro peer feedback and, therefore, make use of a greater proportion of PF. In general, it can be said that the workload when using the new form is shared by the teacher and his/her learners.

To conclude, in this study a new form of PF technique was introduced to ESL learners with a purpose of overcoming its weaknesses and presenting it in an optimal way. The study focuses on examining its impact on three main areas of interest: first, its influence on attitudes towards and motivation to learn writing and use PF; second, its influence on the overall quality of writing, and finally, the focus on, and students' preference for, macro and micro levels of feedback in writing.

1.3 Research gap

The literature on PF has mainly focused on two aspects. First, comparisons between teacher feedback and PF and whether the latter can replace the former; second, training learners in PF. However, only a few studies have involved the introduction of new forms/varieties of PF (Gielen et al., 2010b). For example, Cho, Schunn and Wilson (2006) compared the quality of PF given by a single rater (i.e., peer) and multiple raters, and Gielen et al. (2010b) examined two forms of PF: a question form (in which learners highlight their desire for specific comments on their written work) and reply form (in which learners receive PF and then reflect upon it by highlighting the main factors that affected their learning). Some of these studies have contributed to enriching the quality of PF and writing performance; however, none of them included

shifting learners' attention completely to macro level issues when providing PF on writing.

Although most of the studies on PF have focused on macro and micro issues at the same time, some have paid more attention to macro than to micro issues (Min, 2006; Alhazmi & Schofield, 2007). Only one study I have come across, by Van Steendam et al. (2010), examined an aspect of the area involving macro writing features and PF. However, their study examined the effect of different types of *instruction* (i.e., observation and practising) in revision strategies, followed by the students imitating these instructions both in pairs and individually, on the *quality* of macro feedback students provide during PF sessions. In the current study, in contrast, instruction type and the quality of students' macro comments are not the focus. In other words, Van Steendam et al. did not measure the effect of focusing on macro level features on linguistic progress, motivation and attitudes towards PF, or on English writing before and after exposure to the intervention, nor did they investigate learners' preferences with regard to focusing on the macro level when giving feedback to their colleagues. The lack of investigation into these areas has left gaps in our understanding of the effects of PF, and it is these gaps that this study seeks to fill. It is hoped that the results will bring about change in the field of using PF technique in ESL writing.

1.4 Research questions

The purpose of the study and the four research questions with their sub-questions define the focus and scope of the study. These are as follows:

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of involving learners in using peer feedback, as a collaborative learning technique, based on *macro* level

issues, on their attitudes towards peer feedback and writing, on their motivation to give and use peer feedback and to learn writing, on their writing performance, and on their understanding of what constitutes good writing. It is hoped that the results will widen our understanding of the use of collaborative learning in ESL writing classes and encourage other teachers to become more innovative in their teaching.

The research questions are as follows:

R-Q 1: Do students' attitudes and motivation concerning writing change as the course progresses?

Sub-Q 1.1: What are their attitudes towards writing before and after using peer feedback?

Sub-Q 1.2: What is their motivation to write before and after using peer feedback?

R-Q 2: What are the students' attitudes and motivation concerning peer feedback?

Sub-Q 2.1: What are their attitudes towards PF before and after using peer feedback?

Sub-Q 2.2: What is their motivation to use PF before and after using peer feedback?

R-Q 3: What is the effect of PF on students' writing?

Sub-Q 3.1: Do they use, ignore or reject the received feedback?

Sub-Q 3.2: What are the reasons for using, ignoring or rejecting the received feedback?

Sub-Q 3.3: What is the effect on their overall writing quality?

Sub-Q 3.4: How does their understanding of what constitutes good writing change?

R-Q 4: What are the students' attitudes towards giving and receiving feedback from their colleagues based on macro level features?

Sub-Q 4.1: Do students prefer to give and receive feedback based on macro or micro level features?

Sub-Q 4.2: How does the students' preference affect their reaction to the peer feedback they receive?

Sub-Q 4.3: How does the students' preference affect their attitudes and motivation towards peer feedback?

1.5 Outline of the chapters

In chapter 2, the theoretical background to this research is provided by reviewing the areas of interest to the study. A brief review of attitudes and motivation with regard to their nature and effect on performance is first presented. Following this, areas related to the nature of writing, writing approaches and writing features are reviewed. A review of collaborative learning and feedback is then presented, followed by an extensive account of various aspects of the peer feedback technique. The final section of this chapter contains a summary of the main empirical studies on the peer feedback technique, which is followed by a section in which the rationale behind making various decisions for this study is presented.

Chapter 3 contains a discussion of the research design, the methodology, and the research techniques used in this study, and explains why a mixed method approach

was adopted. Additionally, the sample used and the piloting of the instruments are discussed. Other sections involving ethical considerations and the validity and reliability of the study are also included.

Chapter 4 provides a comprehensive presentation of the results of the study obtained from the analyses of the quantitative and qualitative data. The results of the participants' writing test scores are presented, showing how these changed after exposure to each of the two treatments. The chapter presents the questionnaire results concerning the status of, and the change, if any, in, the areas of attitudes, motivation, preferences, effects on writing and PF usage. Similar results obtained from the interviews are presented. The chapter also includes a presentation of the data obtained from the open-ended section of the questionnaire, the verbal protocols and the observations recorded as field notes, in order to provide additional evidence with which to answer the research questions.

Chapter 5 is divided into two sections. The first section discusses each research question with its sub-questions separately using the evidence presented in chapter 4, and these results are then related to findings from the existing literature, reviewed in chapter 2. In the second section of this chapter the most interesting findings of the study are discussed, and attempts are made to speculate on the implications of these findings.

Finally, chapter 6 provides a brief summary of the findings and a discussion within the wider context of PF and ESL. Additionally, an attempt is made to evaluate the design of the study. The limitations of the study are discussed, and recommendations are made for future researchers and practitioners who are interested in the area of PF.

2. Literature Review

The aim of this chapter is to present the theoretical background that was used to underpin this study. The chapter starts with a review of literature on attitudes and motivation and their relation to language learning in an ESL context. The nature of ESL writing is then examined, and this is followed by a discussion of the process approach to writing. The macro and micro level features of writing are reviewed, since these are normally tackled by the process approach and in writing classes. Following this, the concept of collaborative learning, both in general and in writing, is discussed. The chapter then moves on to examine the nature of feedback in general and in relation to writing classes in particular, with sub-sections briefly reviewing teacher and peer feedback as sources of FB. Following this is a longer section dedicated to the technique of peer feedback, covering its advantages and disadvantages and highlighting the advantage of promoting critical thinking in learning. The importance of training learners in making effective use of PF technique is then discussed. Macro and micro levels are looked at once more, but this time in relation to PF technique. This is followed by a brief summary of interesting empirical studies that are seen to include points of relevance to this study. The chapter concludes with a section in which the rationale behind a number of decisions made in this study is discussed, thus providing the reader with a bridge into the subsequent chapter.

2.1 Attitudes, motivation and ESL learning

Researchers have emphasised the importance of attitudes and motivation in learning foreign languages. According to a number of previous studies (e.g., Alhazmi & Schofield, 2007; Hertz-Lazarowitz & Bar-Natan, 2002), introducing new techniques in teaching writing can lead to better outcomes. It has been found that PF in particular can contribute to raising learner awareness of writing features, and can stimulate motivation and improve attitudes. Here, it should be pointed out that the emphasis on nurturing the skill of writing in particular stems from the fact that this skill can support the other skills, in addition to the fact that it can be used to demonstrate what has been learned in other areas (Gomez et al., 1996).

This section will begin by discussing the relationship between attitudes and motivation and writing. Since attitudes are likely to be closely related to motivation, this section will start with a discussion of the most important characteristic features of attitudes, and will then move on to a discussion of motivation and the relationship between motivation and the development of writing.

2.1.1 Attitudes

Bohner and Wanke (2002: 5) define the term ‘attitude’ as a “...summary evaluation of an object or thought”. It is thus a hypothetical construct, which cannot be observed directly, but can be inferred from responses (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). In addition, and as explained by McKenzie (2010), owing to their stability and steadiness, attitudes can be identified and measured. Attitudes contain affective reactions, and can be expressed through verbal and non-verbal processes (Baker, 1992).

According to both behaviourist and cognitive theories, individuals are not born with attitudes; rather, they are learned as a result of socialisation (McKenzie, 2010). From a

cognitive perspective, when attitudes are stimulated, the responses of an individual will be affected (McKenzie, 2010). Because attitudes are developed through exposure, they can be stimulated through experience (Good & Brophy, 1990).

For us as individuals, attitudes are considered important owing to the functions they perform in affecting our lives. On the one hand, for instance, attitudes can offer individuals a simple structure to manage and categorise an environment which otherwise might be seen as complex and ambiguous. Moreover, attitudes can influence the strategies individuals use to acquire knowledge, and thus can contribute to knowledge organisation, which includes essential processes of categorising stimuli in the environment into dimensions such as *good* or *bad* (Erwin, 2001; Perloff, 2003; McKenzie, 2010).

In addition, attitudes also perform an instrumental function, meaning that they can affect the judgments made by individuals. In other words, attitudes can affect individuals' decisions as to whether to approach or avoid certain issues in an environment (Bohner & Wanke, 2002). Furthermore, attitudes can have an effect on the psychological needs of individuals. For instance, prejudicial attitudes can affect how individuals feel about themselves (Erwin, 2001).

McKenzie (2010) explains that, in the language of social psychology, evaluated entities are recognised as attitudinal objects, and include attitudes towards abstract ideas, organisations, events, objects and other individuals. Perloff (2003) claims that some of the examples of attitudes found in the context of language are attitudes to variations in a language, preferences within a language and preferences in learning other languages; thus attitudes can act as factors that determine behaviour and that consequently may result in the formation of behavioural routines (Bohner & Wanke, 2002).

Attitudes and the learning of a foreign language have a reciprocal relationship. In fact, Kara (2009) and Fakeye (2010) suggest that attitudes are highly influential over language learners. For example, Dörnyei and Skehan (2003), Dörnyei et al. (2006) and MacIntyre et al. (1998) explain that attitudes towards the target language play a central role in influencing the level of proficiency of learners, and that learning goals can be achieved through a combination of positive attitudes and effort (Burden, 2004). High achievers tend to develop positive attitudes during the process of learning a language, whereas low achievers may become disappointed, and the rate of their progress in learning may decrease (Svanes, 1988; Wenden, 1991; Victori & Lockhart, 1995; Kiptui & Mbugua, 2009, cited in Tella et al., 2010).

According to Long (1997), there are three predicaments teachers may face if they fail to consider their students' attitudes. First, students may provide insufficient feedback on their learning to their teachers; as a result, teachers may not understand the problems faced by their students. Second, students may continue learning while continuing to hold negative attitudes towards certain practices which may affect their performance, self-esteem and/or future goals. Finally, teachers may become incapable of finding appropriate material to fulfil their students' needs. Here, Blain (2001) explains that teachers can use various techniques, such as PF, in teaching writing, in order to help students develop positive attitudes with respect to making mistakes.

Oppenheim (1992) explains that an intensely positive attitude can produce enthusiasm for particular stimuli in the environment. For instance, students who learn foreign languages can have different levels of attitude intensity. With those who maintain strongly positive attitudes towards the target language, it is very likely that we will observe more effort being made to learn the language. Such attitudes are likely to continue, to steer the learner's behaviour, have an effect on judgments, and be resilient to change (Perloff, 2003). In this regard, Saracaloglu and Varol (2007) found that there

is a significant relationship between foreign language achievement and attitudes, in that the more positive the attitudes are the greater the achievement is likely to be.

Finally, Gardner and Lambert (1972) and Gardner (1985) have reported a relationship between attitudes and motivation, claiming that attitudes have an influence on learners' motivation when it comes to learning foreign languages. Some researchers also claim that attitudes are a component of motivation (e.g., Burden, 2004).

2.1.2 Motivation

Several research studies have examined motivation, exploring its nature and its effect on learning. It is argued, for example, that in the field of second language learning, motivation is a key factor that impacts learner achievement (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007). Cheng and Dörnyei (2007: 153) state that:

“Motivation serves as the initial engine to generate learning and later functions as an on-going driving force that helps to sustain the long and usually laborious journey of acquiring a foreign language. Indeed, it is fair to say that without sufficient motivation even the brightest learners are unlikely to persist long enough to attain any really useful language proficiency, whereas most learners with strong motivation can achieve a working knowledge of the L2, regardless of their language aptitude or any undesirable learning conditions”.

Unfortunately, little research has been conducted into the relationship between motivation and writing instruction (Boscolo & Hidi, 2007: 4). According to the social-

constructivist approach, practices in writing activities are thought to have a strong connection with the social and cultural contexts in which motivation to write is created (Englert, 1992; Nelson & Calfee, 1998; Boscolo & Hidi, 2007). For example, the fact that writing can be seen as a social activity in which learners collaborate in developing a written task can be motivating (Boscolo & Hidi, 2007).

Generally speaking, students' lack of motivation to write in learning situations can be the result of one particular de-motivating aspect of writing itself. According to Boscolo and Hidi (2007), this aspect is the fact that writing is a complex process, and the fact that students, especially beginners, find writing difficult.

For example, when performing an activity in writing, an ability to use strategies of knowledge integration, creating unique links and connections between prior knowledge and the new topic, is required (Boscolo & Hidi, 2007). This complexity means that, for novice learners, as opposed to experts who can overcome writing difficulties by themselves, becoming aware of one's own weaknesses can be difficult. In other words, experts see these difficulties as problems to be solved, whereas novice writers see them as a hindrance, which makes writing unattractive and somehow dangerous. Therefore, Boscolo and Hidi (2007) argue that novice learners can only overcome their weaknesses through exterior interference (e.g., teacher feedback), by which motivation to write can be stimulated.

It is therefore unlikely that learners will be motivated to write and overcome their problems by themselves without the incorporation of collaborative work (Boscolo & Hidi, 2007), in which the teacher plays the role of a facilitator. It should also be taken into account that collaborative writing is a social activity which can affect students' motivation (Daiute, 1989; De Bernardi & McLane, 1990; Antolini, 2006), and that learning in a collaborative setting encourages more focus on the process of writing.

Nelson (2007) explains that the shift in emphasis in writing instruction from the product to the process in the last few decades has been driven by the need to increase students' motivation to write. In this regard, students can write inside the classroom in groups, where attention is usually paid to cognitive processes, such as pre-writing strategies and revisions, and to social processes such as PF (Dahl & Farnan, 1998).

Conversely, writing can also be used to encourage interactions between students as a form of communicative tool, and therefore it becomes an interesting activity, rather than just a task in an academic setting. However, it is unlikely that students will be aware that writing is a powerful tool they can employ to use, fix and change their knowledge and ideas by working as partners in constructing and negotiating meaning through discourse (Boscolo & Hidi, 2007). This awareness must therefore be inculcated by equipping learners with interactive techniques that raise their awareness of how powerful a tool writing can be.

According to Nelson (2007), there are two key components of motivation in writing, namely, being moved to write and trying to move others. The first component provides an invitation to write. In other words, a student can be moved to write when a teacher requires him/her, for example, to write about a topic of interest to the student, in which case he/she will engage in a *rhetorical situation*.

In the words of Bitzer (1968: 1-4), who was the first to discuss this concept, a rhetorical situation is "the context in which speakers or writers create rhetorical discourse... discourse that changes reality through the mediation of thought and action"; therefore, rhetorical discourse comes into existence in response to a situation. In other words, 'rhetorical situation' refers to the nature of the context in which the rhetorical discourse is created: how it is described, what its characteristics are, and how it results in the creation of the rhetoric (Bitzer, 1968). Fiorenza (1987) explains that in

a rhetorical situation, an individual is stimulated to give a response, by means of which he/she has the ability to affect the situation by seeking to persuade and motivate others. Nelson (2007) argues that recently, 'rhetorical situations' are seen to play an essential role in writing, because they are found to provide the context in which student writers are motivated to write.

The second key component discussed by Nelson (2007) is that of moving an audience, or writing in order to have an effect on others. Writers write for particular reasons, and these reasons can have effects on the intended audience, even if the intended audience is themselves. The reasons for writing, from a general perspective, can be to inform, persuade, or to entertain readers, and can also be for the students to express or discover themselves (Nelson & Kinneavy, 2003). Nelson (2007) adds that these writers can be judged as successful if they affect their audience in the intended ways.

2.2 The nature of writing and ESL contexts

Having established how attitudes and motivation are linked to writing development, it is important to explain the nature of writing in relation to the L2 learning context. For most L2 learners, writing is considered a skill that reinforces other skills, which are essential parts of the language. Although writing is being used as a means of demonstrating learning, it is also itself a means of learning and self-discovery (Gomez et al., 1996). Success in most disciplines depends, at least partly, on writing (Cho & Schunn, 2007). It has been reported by nationwide surveys in the US that the majority of students of all ages appear to have writing difficulties. For instance, one study revealed that 85% of students appear to reach only a basic level in writing, while only

one per cent is equipped with effective writing skills (Cho & Schunn, 2007). If this is the case with native writers, then what is the situation with ESL/EFL learners?

When asking learners to write an essay, they are being asked to structure information in response to the title of the essay (Norton, 2004). It can be said that learners will learn by performing such a task, provided it is constructed in a way that encourages learning. However, undergraduate essay tasks still ask students to *describe*, *outline* and *compare* and *contrast* and so on. Such instructions may not involve learners with the material in a meaningful way (Norton, 2004). Students can perceive these assignments as artificial, and as just a job that needs to be done to get a particular degree or award. In this regard, Norton (2004) explains that particular techniques can be used to encourage learning; moreover, using the appropriate technique is necessary in order to achieve the desired learning outcomes, and this is also how an active learning environment is encouraged (Orsmond et al., 2002).

Denicolo et al. (1992) draw attention to three aspects of active learning:

- Involvement of learners in searching for personal and academic meaning in their studies.
- Providing the learners with greater responsibility for their learning by thinking things through, dealing with problems, and discussing ideas with colleagues.
- Prioritising skills acquirement for learners by encouraging them to master the body of knowledge under consideration.

Teachers who seek to promote active learning environments can reach this goal by introducing collaborative learning techniques such as PF. PF, as will be discussed later on in this chapter, appears to embrace the three aspects of active learning suggested by

Denicolo et al. (1992). Moreover, although PF technique is only employed during certain parts of the long process of writing, the entire process contributes to the promotion of an active learning environment.

2.3 Writing approaches: *the process approach*

As discussed in the previous section, the complexity of learning writing can be reduced by fostering collaboration between learners; this may take the form of a long process, as in the process approach to writing. In this approach a great deal of attention is paid to teacher-student encounters through written texts, and it is more often utilised in L2 contexts (Heald-Taylor, 1994; Pennington & Cheung, 1995; Hyland, 2003b). In this approach, teachers are encouraged to support writers by providing feedback on multiple drafts. This involves revision *during* the process of writing rather than at the end. More emphasis is placed on macro than on micro level issues³ through writing and rewriting (Hyland & Hyland, 2006a). Attention is paid to the various stages a written task goes through by helping learners to focus on the different stages of pre-writing, editing, redrafting, and producing the final draft (Harmer, 2001). This approach thus helps student writers to produce good work through the adoption of more effective writing strategies.

Harmer (2001) suggests that the process approach may not be appropriate at all times: for instance, it may not be appropriate when the writer is working alone or when class time is limited. Of course, the stages of the process approach can be time-consuming and they cannot be completed in, say, fifteen minutes; nevertheless, it does mean that the learners are involved in discussion, research, paying attention to linguistic

³ Macro level issues will be discussed in the following section (Section 2.3)

concerns, and being encouraged to interact with others inside the classroom (Harmer, 2001). Moreover, Patthey-Chavez et al. (2004) suggest that the emphasis, through the process approach, on a cycle of systematic revision (i.e., editing, revising, redrafting), in which teacher and/or peer feedback is provided, is a key factor in student development. And, as mentioned earlier, the shift in emphasis in writing instruction from the product to the process in the last few decades has been driven by the need to increase students' motivation to write (Nelson, 2007).

According to Folse et al. (1999), in this approach there are six stages for learners to follow. First, *choosing a topic* – in which learners can decide what kind of essay they are going to write, and what sort of topics interest them. Second, *brainstorming* – learners are encouraged during this stage to write down any idea that pops into their minds, which can be either good or bad. Therefore, the purpose of this stage is to generate as many ideas as possible. Folse et al. (1999) explain that there are brainstorming strategies, such as clustering, making lists and diagramming, from which learners can select according to their preference.

The third stage is to *outline and develop a rough draft*. This stage has two parts: outlining, which means choosing the main points that will be included in the essay, with some supporting details, such as examples, reasons and definitions. The other part of this stage is to develop a rough draft (1st draft) by using the information generated in the brainstorming stage. The first draft may contain many errors of all kinds; however, the main concern here is to put the developed ideas into sentences (Folse et al., 1999). Having completed this stage, learners are then given the opportunity to improve their essays at the level of meaning in the subsequent stages, as explained below.

The fourth stage is to *clean up the rough draft* (the 1st draft), as it may appear messy and difficult for others to read, either as a result of poor handwriting or for some other reason. In addition, writers might need to make some adjustments to their essays before they can be seen by anyone else. Now that the 1st draft has been prepared, the *editing* stage (the fifth stage) can begin. In this stage, learners can receive feedback on their essays. The final stage involves *revising* the draft by reacting to the given comments and rewriting the essay. The aforementioned stages can be summarised as follows:

- 1- Choosing a topic
- 2- Brainstorming
- 3- Outlining a rough draft
- 4- Cleaning up the rough draft
- 5- Editing
- 6- Revising the draft

2.4 Writing issues (Macro vs. Micro levels)

When learners engage in the process approach, much attention is given to different writing features during the various stages (e.g., during the editing stage). This section deals with various features of writing and classifies them on two levels. The first level is that concerned with the development and discovery of meaning (Hyland & Hyland, 2006a). It is concerned with major issues related to meaning such as content and structure (Sharples, 1999), idea development and the focus of the written work (Van Steendam et al., 2010). Hyland (2003b: 210) says that the content of a successful text contains valuable information and insights, demonstrates a clear understanding of the topic, shows the writer's voice as being honest and convincing, gives clear details and

clear arguments, and is expressed in a manner that is both engaging and alive. This level has been described using a variety of terminologies: global issues (e.g., Jones et al., 2006), higher-order concerns (e.g., Van Steendam et al., 2010) and macro level (e.g., Min, 2008). In explaining what is meant by the macro level, Sharples (1999: 8) states that, “A writer generates ideas, creates plans, drafts a text and reviews the work, in a cycle of engagement and reflection. But texts longer than a couple of paragraphs generally conform to an overall structure, a *macro structure*, that frames the style and content of the text and organises the expectations of the reader”. Sharples (ibid.) explains that a macro structure operates at a global level, and that some expert writers learn the skill of writing using their own macro structures.

The second level is concerned with mechanical accuracy and control of language (Hyland & Hyland, 2006a). This level focuses on the *form* of a text and has been referred to as surface issues (e.g., Berg, 1999); local issues (e.g., Jones et al., 2006); lower-order concerns (Van Steendam et al., 2010), and micro level features (Min, 2008). The micro level features of a text include aspects such as capitalisation, punctuation, hyphenation, page formatting, titles and subtitles, spelling, appropriate word choice, grammatical sentence structure (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996: 326), and cohesive devices (Hyland, 2003b). In this study, the terms *macro* and *micro* are used to refer to the two aforementioned levels.

These macro and micro levels are commonly utilised when providing teacher-student FB or peer-to-peer feedback. With respect to peer-to-peer feedback and revision, Paulus (1999) conducted a study examining the effect of peer and teacher revision on students’ improvement in writing. In analysing the changes made in the revisions, she referred to Faigley and Witte’s (1981) taxonomy of revisions (see table 2 below). According to Paulus (1999), this taxonomy of revisions is categorised into two levels: changes at the surface level (micro level) and changes at the meaning level (macro

level) (Faigley & Witte, 1981). It is easy to distinguish between the two levels described in the taxonomy. Micro level changes that are made to a text do not add any new information to, nor do they remove any information from a text that affects the meaning, but only involve changes to the surface structure. On the other hand, macro level changes are changes which do affect the meaning, either by removing already existing information, by adding new information to the text, or by reordering the ideas (Paulus, 1999).

Table 2.1: Taxonomy of Revisions (Adapted from Faigley & Witte, 1981, cited in Paulus, 1999: 274).

I. Surface Changes (Do not affect the meaning. No new information is brought to the text.)

A. Formal changes (editing)

- (1) Spelling/capitalization
- (2) Tense/number/modality
- (3) Abbreviations/contractions
- (4) Punctuation
- (5) Formatting
- (6) Morphological changes

B. Meaning-preserving changes (Paraphrase the original concepts in the text by making them implicit or explicit, without altering the meaning. No new information is brought to the text. Primarily syntactical or lexical changes. All information is recoverable by inferencing.)

- (11) Additions (information was previously inferred but is now explicit)
- (12) Deletions (information was previously explicit but now must be inferred)
- (13) Substitutions (elements are traded)
- (14) Permutations (elements are rearranged)
- (15) Distributions (a single unit becomes more than one unit)
- (16) Consolidations (multiple units are combined into one unit)

II. Meaning Changes (Affect the concepts and meaning by bringing new information to the text.)

A. Microstructure Changes (Simple adjustments or elaborations of existing text. Do not affect the overall summary, gist, or direction of the ideas in the text. Do not affect the overall interpretation of the text. May involve the use of cohesive ties, causing sentence sequences to be understood as consistent and parallel connected discourse.)

- (21) Additions
- (22) Deletions
- (23) Substitutions
- (24) Permutations
- (25) Distributions
- (26) Consolidations

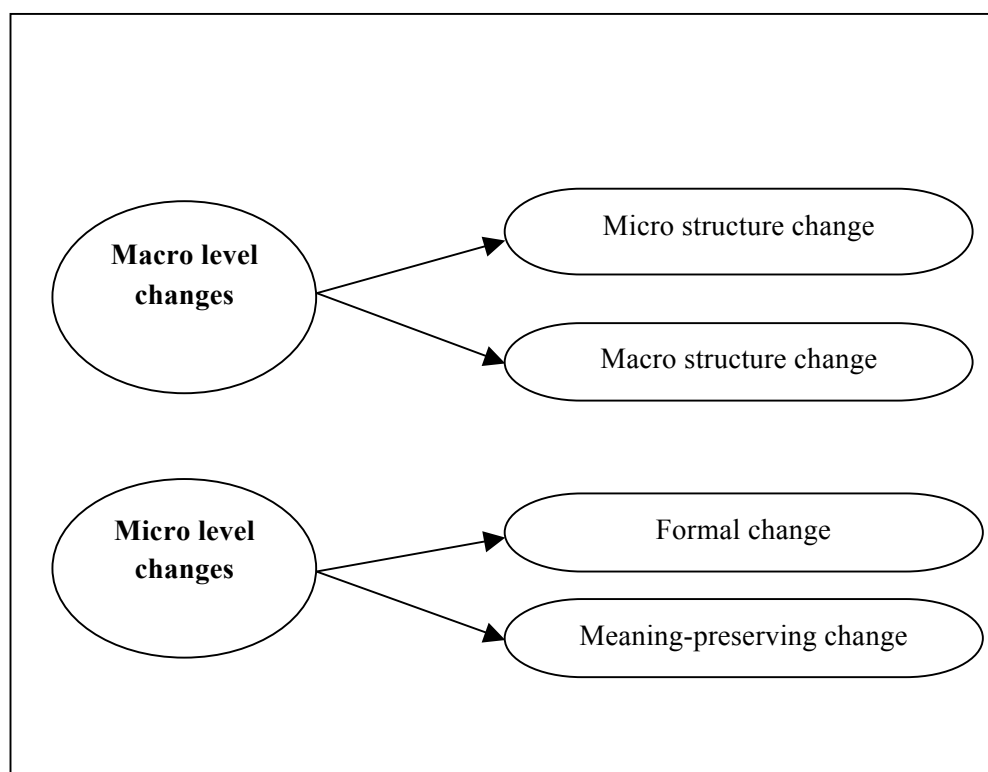
B. Macrostructure Changes (Alter the text's overall direction and gist. Will affect the way a text would be summarized. If the concepts involved in a particular change affect the way other parts of the text are read, it is a macro structure change. May affect the text's overall global meaning and coherence, influencing the summary and interpretation of the text. Coherence factors may include the focus of the text, relevance to the topic, consideration of audience, overall purpose, and pragmatic unity.)

- (31) Additions
- (32) Deletions
- (33) Substitutions
- (34) Permutations
- (35) Distributions
- (36) Consolidations

In more detail, micro level changes can be illustrated at two sub-levels. The first is formal change, which includes changes in aspects such as punctuation, tenses, spelling. The second consists of meaning-preserving changes, which are changes that include paraphrasing existing ideas without altering the meaning (Paulus, 1999).

Macro level changes in a text can also be made at two sub-levels. The first is the level that includes changes that result in the altering of information, but that do not affect the direction or the overall gist of the text. At this level changes are minor and can be designed to improve existing ideas or to add information to the text. The other sub-level of change is concerned with the overall meaning of a text. If changes are made at this sub-level in one section of a text, it could affect the way a reader reads when moving to another section (Paulus, 1999). Figure 2.1 summarises Faigley and Witte's (1981) classification of macro and micro level changes.

Figure 2.1: Summary of FB levels of changes.



There has been considerable argument about what constitutes good quality writing. Some consider grammatical accuracy to be the criterion to use in order to differentiate between a good text and a bad text (e.g., Celce-Murcia, 1992; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1992). Others deem that the appropriateness, sufficiency and organisation of information should be the criteria used to assess the quality of the writing (e.g., Flower, 1979; Min, 2006). Moreover, there are various studies on ESL/EFL writing instruction that argue for the need for learners to improve the quality of their writing by focusing on the macro rather than on the micro level (e.g., Zamel, 1985; Truscott & Hsu, 2008). Nevertheless, nurturing both levels can be important, since reading an essay which has a high quality content but which is weak in form can be difficult and unattractive for readers.

2.4.1 Error correction (Micro level features)

The two levels of writing features concern both teachers and learners when it comes to FB provision and writing development. However, the question of whether or not learners should be provided with corrective feedback on their errors, particularly in L2 writing classes for the sake of writing development, has been widely discussed in the literature. In this respect, an early research study on L2 writing that was influenced by process theories argued that grammar correction can be discouraging and unhelpful (Hyland, 2003a). For instance, Zamel (1985) takes the position that teachers should *refrain* from reacting to micro level features, and prioritise macro level features. According to Hyland (2003a), this argument is supported by several other researchers. For example, Leki (1991) explains that, "...many ESL writing teachers have now also embraced approaches to teaching writing that de-emphasize the role of error correction" (p: 204), and states that teachers should have a belief that rich content is more important than grammatical perfection, and that learners should share this belief.

In 1996, Truscott published a highly controversial article arguing against grammar correction. He argued that providing learners with error correction can be, among other negative aspects, time-consuming and ineffective. In addition, despite this time and effort, an L2 writing instructor who focuses on micro issues (i.e., the kind of errors that can be indicated using codes) may not receive the positive results he/she expects. One of the reasons for this is that the focus on micro issues takes time and energy and shifts the attention away from more important concerns (i.e., macro issues) in writing (Truscott, 1999).

In a later study, Truscott and Hsu (2008) came to the conclusion that error correction may become harmful to the learning process in L2 writing classrooms, an argument which is supported by other researchers (e.g., Fazio, 2001; Truscott, 2007). In this respect, Kepner (1991), Semke (1984) and Sheppard (1992) argue that students who

receive error correction can be affected in a way that makes them tend to simplify and shorten their writing in an attempt to avoid making errors. Moreover, in an empirical study that investigated the effect of only responding to macro level features and the effect of only responding to micro level features, Sheppard (1992) found that the former is likely to improve grammatical accuracy more than the latter (i.e., by only responding to micro level). He explains this by saying that prompting learners to go back and make the meaning of their writing clearer can lead to more learning about the micro level.

However, other researchers take an opposite position, in which error correction is seen as crucial for learning L2 writing (e.g., Ferris, 1999; Ashwell, 2000; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Chandler, 2003). These researchers give different reasons in support of their position. For example, Ferris (1999: 8) argues that students should become more “self-sufficient” in fixing their own texts, and that the absence of micro feedback may mean that learners will not take correcting their grammatical errors seriously. In this regard, it is argued that raising students’ awareness concerning the development of self-editing skills as well as concerning the importance of accuracy can lead to greater motivation in writing (e.g., Bates et al., 1993; Ferris, 1995b; Reid, 1997). Here, it should be noted that students are likely to be less capable of self-editing lexical errors as well as grammatical errors (Ferris, 2004).

Although the majority of the studies presented in the literature are in favour of error correction (interestingly, this notion is even accepted by Truscott (2007) himself, who leads the opposition), it is not possible to assert the superiority of this argument over the counter argument. In other words, one cannot claim that error correction has no negative effects nor that it should be forbidden simply because the literature also presents evidence in support of the latter argument (see table 2.2 below). Here, and generally speaking, Ferris (2004) suggests that these differences in the findings of

these studies (shown in the table) come from their having inconsistent designs in terms of, for example, sample size, duration of treatment, types of writing and types of FB given, which may make it difficult to compare them. In this sense, it can be said that there is still a great deal of debate concerning this issue, and that it requires intensive research.

Table 2.2: Summary of research findings: what does the available research evidence demonstrate about the effectiveness of error correction in L2 writing classes? (Taken from Ferris, 2004: 51).

Research question	Studies and findings
1- Do students who receive error correction produce more accurate texts than those who receive no error feedback?	Yes: Ashwell (2000), Fathman and Whalley (1990), Ferris and Roberts (2001), Kepner (1991).
	No: Cohen and Robbins (1976), Polio et al. (1998).
	Unclear: Semke (1984).
2- Do students who receive error correction improve in accuracy over time?	Yes: Chandler (2003), Ferris (1995a), Ferris and Helt (2000), Frantzen (1995), Lalande (1982), Robb et al. (1986), Sheppard (1992).
	No: Cohen and Robbins (1976), Polio et al. (1998).
	Unclear: Semke (1984).

Whether or not researchers think error feedback should be given, students' preferences should be taken into consideration. A number of studies carried out in L2 contexts have reported the students' desire to receive feedback on micro level aspects, and found that they perceived it as extremely important to their success (e.g., Leki, 1991; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1994; Ferris, 2004). Hyland (2003b) stated that learners in an ESL/EFL context prefer to receive feedback on ideas and organisation on their first

drafts, and then receive feedback on grammar on later drafts (table 4 below shows a summary of the literature adapted from Bitchener and Ferris, 2012: 93). The differences in learners' preferences as to whether or not to receive FB on macro and/or micro level features in writing may be derived from the fact that learners have strong opinions when it comes to receiving FB on their writing, and changing such preferences can be difficult.

Table 2.3: Students' preferences for macro and/or micro feedback.

Type	Studies	Findings
<i>Learner preference: macro vs. micro level feedback</i>	Cohen (1987), Cohen & Cavalcanti (1990), Ferris (1995b), Hedgcock & Lefkowitz (1994; 1996), Radecki & Swales (1988).	Learners prefer both micro and macro feedback; occasionally, micro feedback is preferred

In summary, the literature shows that providing learners with error correction (micro level features) has advantages and disadvantages and that there is no consensus of opinion on the right focus or balance.

2.5 Collaborative Learning

In writing classes, writing features — both macro and micro levels — form to a certain extent the central part and/or the focus of the teaching and learning. The way in which these features are tackled varies from one teaching strategy to another. In the current study the teaching and learning of the writing features were conducted through collaborative learning techniques. In this section collaborative learning is discussed, with a particular focus on collaborative writing in the L2 context.

In recent years, higher education students have been asked to learn collaboratively, and the value of this approach is being increasingly acknowledged (McWham et al., 2003). Generally speaking, grouping and pairing learners with the intention of achieving academic goals is the central principle underlying the concept of collaborative learning (Gokhale, 1995). In collaborative learning processes, learners work together by coordinating efforts and engage in problem solving (Dillenbourg et al., 1996). It is considered a central component of classroom learning owing to the fact that it encourages learners to take responsibility for their own learning (Bruffee, 1999; Jong, 2009), and because collaboration between students has been recognised as an essential component of *student-centred* classrooms (Freeman, 1992).

Turnbull et al. (2010: 127) assert that learners should be encouraged to become creative in educational contexts, describing creativity as “the ability to generate new ideas and combine existing ideas in new ways to find novel solutions to problems”, and that collaborative learning environments can enhance learner creativity. Murdoch and Wilson (2008) state that as teachers we need to teach our students how to work collaboratively, and list some of the key principles of collaborative learning, saying that it can:

1. contribute to the learning of the whole class;
2. lead to an efficient use of time;
3. improve individual thinking;
4. demonstrate the social power of learning;
5. increase self-esteem and confidence, which are known to be crucial in learning;
6. be found fundamental to success, even outside educational contexts, and

7. enhance learner accountability, participation and communicative skills.

There are a number of benefits of utilising collaborative learning in educational contexts; according to Panitz (2001), these result from the continuous interaction between the students, who engage in the learning process and become active rather than passive learners, and thus the most effective form of interaction is produced. Therefore, Panitz (2001) suggests that these benefits can be, first, *academic benefits*: promoting critical thinking, involving learners in active learning, improving classroom outcomes, and introducing proper problem-solving techniques; second, *social benefits*: developing social interaction skills, promoting positive approaches to solving problems, building positive relationships in an environment, encouraging both majorities and minorities in one environment to work together, creating a conducive atmosphere for students to help each other, and providing situations in which leadership skills can be practised; third, *psychological benefits*: reducing anxiety and increasing satisfaction with the learning experience, which in turn can lead to higher self-esteem, and developing mutual positive regard between the teacher and his/her students.

McWham et al. (2003) and Freeman (1992) suggest that different language learning contexts need to utilise collaborative learning for a variety of reasons. For example, because of the vast numbers of students enrolling in higher education, there is a need to develop ways for them to learn together using learner-driven approaches such as peer learning and student projects, which usually require working cooperatively. Moreover, students might prefer to work collaboratively rather than competitively. Another reason is that it helps teachers to organise classroom activities into academic and social learning experiences (Freeman, 1992; McWham et al., 2003).

In order to stimulate learning, it is necessary to have a free exchange of ideas, something which can be hindered by certain types of activity; therefore, working collaboratively with peers can facilitate learning (Van Boxtel et al., 2000). In collaborative peer work, learners ideally should share similar prior knowledge levels and work simultaneously. Additionally, they aim to achieve the same goals and take part in the same activities, and this can strengthen positive student interdependence (Van Boxtel et al., 2000). Here, learners can not only exchange ideas, but also develop their critical thinking, by engaging in discussion and taking responsibility for their own learning (Gokhale, 1995).

Moreover, collaborative learning employs self-contained tasks, which focus mainly on joint activities with the aim of creating a shared understanding (Tolmie et al., 2010). At higher educational levels, collaborative learning can engender benefits such as improvements in both the application of skills and conceptual grasp, and can create more positive social relations (Ruys et al., 2010; Tolmie et al., 2010). According to Tolmie et al. (2010), such an impact on the learners is considered significant, in that the context in which collaborative learning is utilised can become more positive, and learning tension is reduced as a consequence of the increase in mutual understanding between learning partners.

2.5.1 Collaborative writing

In its broadest definition, group writing includes “...any writing done in collaboration with one or more persons” (Ede & Lunsford, 1990: 14). According to Noel and Robert (2004), collaborative writing was first investigated in the 1970s; however, the process was not actually explored until the late 1980s. In the field of second language writing, a number of researchers (e.g., Daiute, 1986; Wells et al., 1990) suggest that students should work collaboratively during the writing process in order to develop their

writing skills. During this collaboration, learners share responsibility for the quality of the produced text, making decisions on different aspects of that text. In addition, researchers have shown that collaborative writing fosters reflective thinking (e.g., Higgins et al., 1992; Keys, 1994).

Peer Feedback (PF) in writing is one example of collaborative writing which has been found to be highly effective in educational contexts (Ruys et al., 2010; Tsuei, 2011). It involves, if presented in a well structured design, a mechanism of turn taking (i.e., the learners take turns to assume the roles of sender and receiver) in each given learning activity (Tsuei, 2011), signifying learner accountability in learning writing. In addition, as PF technique involves giving and receiving PF in one-to-one conferences, it can develop a sense of criticality that can have a positive influence on a learner's own writing, as will be discussed later on in this chapter.

Feedback, as a central component of PF technique, in the field of second language writing can provide elaborated information (i.e., detailed and given with much care; for example, *do this... add... or avoid... etc*), which can be used effectively to overcome a learner's weaknesses. Additionally, it can include justifications for seeing something as an error in the task in question (for example, *this is wrong because...*). In this regard, Gielen et al. (2010a) suggest that associating feedback with proper justification can have a positive effect on writing skills. In this sense, it can be said that feedback can help improve students' writing, as will be discussed in the following sections.

2.6 What is feedback and why is it significant?

Learning in a collaborative context which involves the provision of FB on learners' performance is much appreciated by learners. This is because the learning is supported by a variety of processes, one of which is feedback (Askew & Lodge, 2000), and because good pedagogy has good feedback at its heart (Brown et al., 2006). The purpose of providing feedback in an educational context is broadly seen as to consolidate and encourage learning, a view that is being adopted by an increasing number of researchers in the field of second language writing. Such feedback can be described as the "...information given to indicate the level of competence that has been achieved in performance of a task. Feedback can therefore be positive or negative depending on whether the task was completed well or not" (Marriott & Galbraith, 2005: 63). Askew and Lodge (2000: 1) explain that it has been argued that feedback is "...a crucial feature of teaching and learning processes and one element in a repertoire of connected strategies to support learning".

Feedback is the transmission of information, the aim of which is to enable the learner to make improvements (Askew & Lodge, 2000). It also plays an important role in learners' performance by motivating them and stimulating their performance (Ashford & Tsui, 1991). For example, in process-based classrooms we can see its importance, in that it plays a role in enabling learners to control their compositional skills, and also enables teachers to employ scaffolding learning techniques (Hyland & Hyland, 2006a). Therefore, and from a general perspective, FB is used to help and teach learners by providing comments on how they have used the language in the past in order to improve their use in the future (Harmer, 2001). One of the main principles to emerge from research on how learners learn is the importance of giving *timely* and targeted feedback on learners' work, since this should help deepen their understanding and improve their learning (Brown et al., 2006). Brown et al. (2006) also explain that

in order to adapt instruction to students' needs, it is important that the adapted instruction is consistent with the principle of student-centred teaching, and this should lead to several benefits, such as better learning and the encouragement of deep thinking.

'Timely' feedback is feedback that comes immediately after the learner's input (Brown et al., 2006) — in that it is provided very soon, before learners move to work on another task. Teachers and researchers have identified the most effective form of feedback as being that which occurs at a suitable time (timely), is specific, and is tied to explicit criteria (OECD, 2005). Explicit criteria can be frequent, detailed and include specific statements showing students what they are expected to perform and/or achieve in a particular task (see appendix IV for an example). Furthermore, feedback can also be more effective when given in a way that connects to learners' prior knowledge; in addition, it is most effective when it leads the learner to revisit the activity that the feedback refers to (Brown et al., 2006).

2.7 The nature of feedback

Many teachers see their FB as an effective way of helping their students to excel in their learning. When providing FB, different teachers may have different purposes when examining a student's work. These purposes may also vary from one student to another, from one draft to another, and from one assignment to another (Bates, Lane & Lange, 1993). Hyland and Hyland (2006b) explain that these purposes can be expressed as *praise* (positive comments), *criticism* (negative comments) or *suggestions* (constructive criticism). It is suggested that written feedback can be used effectively to facilitate the development of writing only if it responds to the writer's needs: for instance, it addresses his or her weaknesses (Hyland & Hyland, 2006b).

Studies have revealed that feedback on writing can strengthen the relationship between the teacher and his/her students, and that it is not a mere reference to students' texts (e.g., Hyland, 1998; Conrad & Goldstein, 1999; Hyland & Hyland, 2001). Such a relationship can be established when what was taught is used to produce written feedback and then reinforced with oral feedback. This allows more interaction in the classroom, and is likely to create a closer relationship, especially when the feedback is acted upon (Hyland & Hyland, 2006a). Because students in large classes may see the teacher as unavailable, and therefore are likely to hesitate to seek further clarification on their performance, such a closer relationship can encourage them to see the teacher as approachable. Moreover, the use of appropriate language and style when giving feedback can also affect the relationship between the two parties and can lead to a better grasp of the emphasised knowledge (Hyland & Hyland, 2006b).

It is important to indicate that for feedback to be effective, it must be given according to certain criteria, which should allow the feedback to be specific and focused on both the learning itself and the process of learning (Gibbs & Simpson, 2002, cited in Grami, 2010). In addition, Ferris (2006) observed that, when giving FB, in most cases direct feedback does not impact on learners' improvement in the long term, whereas indirect feedback tends to have much more effect on learners (see section 2.8.1 for more information on direct and indirect feedback).

2.8 Feedback in writing classes

Given the importance claimed in the literature for the role of feedback in language learning generally, it is not surprising that feedback is also seen as central to the development of writing skills. Its importance in this regard was first recognised when

learner-centred approaches to writing instruction were developed in the 1970s (Hyland & Hyland, 2006a). Before that time the feedback mainly took the form of marginal notes, as compared to the current form, which commonly extends to include oral interaction between two parties (i.e., teacher-learner/learner-learner) (Hyland & Hyland, 2006a). The way feedback is given depends on the form of the written task and the intended effect. For instance, giving feedback on communicative or creative writing (e.g., reports, stories or letters) requires our close observation and clear demonstration of points of interest within the content (Harmer, 2001). However, it should be mentioned that the way we give feedback to learners can significantly affect their attitudes towards writing and their motivation for learning in the future (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996: 377).

There are several ways of giving feedback on a written task which can promote successful writing. One is for the given feedback to *respond* to, rather than assess or evaluate, the students' written task (Harmer, 2001; Hyland & Hyland, 2006b). This is accomplished by explaining how successful we think the text is and how it can be improved. In this case our comments should be helpful and not critical (Harmer, 2001).

Another method is by using codes, either in the body of the text or in the corresponding margins. These codes can be something like: *S* for incorrect spelling, *P* for punctuation... etc. These can act as neat, non-threatening and more helpful comments. Additionally, teachers are advised to avoid the over-correction of scripts (Harmer, 2001; Bitchener & Ferris, 2012), since this will help learners to focus on other important issues rather than being distracted by too many comments (Harmer, 2001). After providing learners with feedback on a written task, we expect to receive a revised draft which responds to the given comments, and this can show how effective the feedback is within the learning process (Harmer, 2001).

The *adequacy* of the feedback can also be a factor that plays a role in the learner's writing development. Some have defined adequate feedback as feedback that is polite and non-judgmental (e.g., Tang & Thitecott, 1999). Others see it as feedback that focuses on macro level features using particular evaluative criteria (e.g., Zhu, 1995; Min, 2005). In support of the latter notion, Van Steendam et al. (2010: 319) explain that adequate feedback is "...detailed feedback which addresses global concerns in a text, uses metalanguage to diagnose textual problems and suggests specific revisions". They add that once learners are equipped with the skill to detect, discuss and revise the macro features of their peers' texts, they should be able to produce adequate feedback.

Nevertheless it should be pointed out here that it is important to consider the effectiveness of feedback that focuses on the micro level, since there is still a question as to whether or not learners benefit from such feedback in the long and short term, and it is an area that is still being investigated. In this regard, Hyland and Hyland (2006a), for example, discuss the view of some researchers that focusing on the micro level can be unhelpful and discouraging (see section 2.4.1 and table 2.2).

2.8.1 Teacher feedback

Written feedback given by the teacher is seen as the most traditional and most commonly used technique of providing feedback (Hyland & Hyland, 2006b). ESL students, for example, attach a great deal of importance to the teacher's written, as opposed to verbal, feedback (Hyland & Hyland, 2006b). Writing conferences (i.e., one-to-one tutoring) are usually used to provide feedback, offering the chance for discussion with teachers, and emphasising the importance of two-way communication. Furthermore, the Vygotskian concept of scaffolding is seen as being central to such conferences, with feedback being delivered to the learner through dialogue between the involved parties and then being used by the learner to develop both the written text

and his/her writing abilities (Williams, 2002). The nature of such an interactive conference allows the provision of comments on learners' educational and writing needs (Hyland & Hyland, 2006b).

There are two common ways for the teacher to provide feedback on micro level features: *directly* and *indirectly*. Bitchener and Ferris (2012) describe direct feedback as being of a more explicit nature, and define it as “a correction that not only calls attention to the error but also provides a specific solution to the problem” (p: 148). In other words, direct feedback is when the teacher indicates the error and then provides the correct form; then all the student is required to do is to copy the correct form that has been provided (Ferris & Roberts, 2001).

The other way — providing feedback indirectly — is where the teacher indicates, in one way or another, an error, and then gives the student writer the chance to diagnose and determine the correct form *by him/herself* (Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Bitchener & Ferris, 2012). Bitchener and Ferris (2012) suggest that in this case indicating errors can take the form of underlining, highlighting, circling or any other form that marks the location of an error; therefore, this method is seen to be of a less explicit nature.

Second language theorists and ESL writing specialists argue that the majority of student writers prefer indirect feedback because it guides their learning and engages them in problem solving (Lalande, 1982; Ferris & Roberts, 2001). Additionally, others argue that the reflection on linguistic forms can lead to long-term acquisition (e.g., James, 1998; Reid, 1998). Empirical studies have also shown that indirect feedback can produce more improvement in accuracy over time when compared to the direct approach (e.g., Lalande, 1982; Ferris & Helt, 2000; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Ferris et al., 2010). Bitchener and Ferris (2012) summarise a number of studies on this subject, as shown below in table 5.

Table 2.4: Students' preferences for direct or indirect FB

Type	Studies	Findings
<i>Learner preference: direct vs. indirect feedback</i>	Enginarlar (1993), Ferris (2006), Ferris & Roberts (2001), Ferris et al. (2010), Leki (1991), Radecki & Swales (1988), Saito (1994).	Learners understand the significance of corrective FB; direct FB is preferred by some of them, while others prefer to receive it indirectly because, especially when it is ideally coded, it helps improvement in the long term.

Since the literature suggests that there are advantages in providing indirect feedback on writing, there has been a great deal of argument with regard to the way it should be given. There are two approaches to giving indirect feedback - first, as pointed out earlier, the errors can easily be underlined and left for the learner to diagnose and modify accordingly. Second, the errors can be underlined and labelled in terms of type or category (Lalande, 1982; Bates et al., 1993; James, 1998; Reid, 1998). Ferris and Roberts (2001) explain that coded errors can be time-consuming for the teacher, and the fact that the teacher may mislabel an error can be a significant problem, with Lee (2005) adding that it can also be exhausting.

Finally, there is a wide variety of approaches to teacher micro FB in particular to be found in the literature. As discussed earlier (see section 2.4.1), there is a continuing debate on whether or not micro FB should be provided to L2 learners, with the majority of the studies indicating its effectiveness in L2 contexts, and showing that teacher micro FB is preferred by learners (see table 2.3). It can thus be concluded that teachers should be encouraged to provide micro as well as macro FB to their students,

while at the same time attempting to determine which methods are most effective with their students.

2.8.2 Peer feedback: an overview

Although teacher FB is the most commonly used technique in writing classes, teachers are trying to utilise other FB sources, simply because there are more advantages to be derived from doing so. PF is one of the techniques that writing classes make use of. Many researchers have examined its effects on learners and their writing, and most recommend it for learning.

Effective feedback, as suggested by the literature, is feedback that leads to a number of modes which allow for response and interaction (Hyland & Hyland, 2006b) (see section 2.6). The writing conference is one, and the most extensively employed, mode adopted by teachers; in this mode the meaning and interpretation of the feedback are constantly negotiated by the learners. PF is seen as a means both of teaching and of creating learning benefits (Hyland & Hyland, 2006a; Gielen et al., 2010b). Hu (2005: 321) explains that in PF situations, learners engage in the collaborative activity of reading, critiquing and providing feedback on each other's writing, both to secure immediate textual improvement and to develop, over time, stronger writing competence via mutual scaffolding. Moreover, PF in collaborative writing in particular allows a high level of response and interaction between each party (i.e., the evaluator and the writer), who engage in providing two-way feedback and negotiate the meaning (Rollinson, 2005).

Gielen et al. (2010b) define PF as an activity completed by equal status learners and which has a qualitative output. During this process, learners discuss in detail the strengths and weaknesses of a particular task, offering suggestions for additional improvement. Gielen et al. (ibid.) also see it as the counterpart of teacher feedback.

Furthermore, peer response is held to be an important aspect of second language feedback, and several researchers have argued that it is important to incorporate it into classroom practice.

2.9 Peer feedback and ESL learners

PF has been a commonly used activity within ESL/EFL contexts because of the positive impact it has on the learning process. As shown in the previous section, PF is a means of creating a suitable learning context, and it is suggested that learners need to be empowered within the teaching and learning context if collaborative learning is the aim (Orsmond et al., 2002). Moreover, it is argued that PF can offer the explicit negotiation of meaning in an atmosphere which is considered ‘non-threatening’, owing to the fact that the writer’s missing knowledge is to be supplied by a ‘peer’ reader (O’Brien, 2004). Since the main focus of this section is on PF technique, it includes a discussion of various theoretical underpinnings of the technique.

2.9.1 Advantages and disadvantages of peer feedback

The literature suggests that there are a number of advantages as well as disadvantages to using PF in classrooms. Rollinson (2005) discussed the use of peer feedback in ESL writing classes, and compiled several arguments, from which he proposes that teachers who adopt peer feedback in their teaching do so for several reasons. For instance, peer writers in many cases show acceptance of, and revise according to, the comments provided by their peers, knowing that peers can provide useful feedback. Furthermore, peer feedback tends to have different features from that provided by the teacher in that it appears to be more specific. Also, being critical of a fellow student’s work might develop a sense of criticality towards one’s own work. In addition, two-way feedback

interaction is created, and meaning is negotiated, which leads to a potentially higher level of response and interaction. Finally, teacher response occurs on a more formal level than does peer response; as a result, learners can provide feedback to each other in an informal and more relaxed environment, which can increase their motivation to improve their written work.

In 1998, Jacobs et al. carried out a study involving 121 Chinese ESL students who were in the first and second years of their undergraduate programme. These students received oral and written feedback from both their teacher and their peers on multiple drafts written by them. The students reported that ‘giving’ feedback played a role in their learning. Moreover, over 90% of the students explained their acceptance of peer feedback as a technique because their peers have the ability to spot problems they themselves have missed and they, the peers, can offer more ideas about writing.

Based on an empirical study, Chaudron (1984) reported some other advantages of PF, claiming that:

- despite the fact that the teacher knows more, PF is considered more informative because it is generated at the learners’ level of development of interest;
- learners’ attitudes can be enhanced by the socially supportive peers, and
- learners can improve their knowledge of writing and revision by looking critically at their colleagues’ drafts.

Gielen et al. (2010b) reported some beneficial *side effects* of using peer feedback in class which are mentioned in the literature. One is that learners may attempt to put more time and effort into improving their assignments as a result of social pressure: for instance, they may wish to avoid embarrassment in front of their peers. Another is

that learners may perceive PF as more useful and understandable than that given by their teacher. This is because learners usually tend to be on the same *wavelength*, while teacher's feedback can be more sophisticated, and may be misinterpreted owing to the intellectual distance between the two parties (Gielen et al., 2010b).

A third advantage is that peer feedback can lead learners to understand what feedback really is and how it works. And, as a consequence of practising the assessment process, the learning goals are clarified and internalised. Fourth, when assignments are submitted to the teacher, teachers usually take a long time to provide learners with feedback. It can be said here that immediate imperfect feedback can be more useful than adequate (see section 2.6.) late feedback (see section 2.5). Finally, peer feedback can provide more frequent feedback when the teacher is not able or willing to provide it, and can therefore fill in the gap for learners who need to receive more frequent feedback on their performance (Gielen et al., 2010b).

Yang et al. (2006) examined the nature and impact of teacher feedback and PF in an EFL writing context and found that although teacher FB was preferred (because it is more accurate, reliable and straight to point), the subjects recognised the importance of PF and its role in their learning, suggesting that it allows them to have more communication with, and to benefit from, classmates who are at about the same learning stage and level. Yang et al. (2006) also explained that reservations about PF motivated learners to search for confirmation, which can be done by checking other sources of information, such as asking a teacher, referring to a textbook and so on. On the other hand, receiving teacher feedback may discourage learners' initiative and the development of self-regulated learning, because they might think that since the teacher has pointed out the required changes, there is no need to check for confirmation from other sources. Yang et al. (2006) also found that teacher feedback can be

misinterpreted as a result of the intellectual distance between the teacher and the student.

Tsui and Ng (2000) investigated the impact of peer and teacher feedback on writing in an ESL context. They identified some roles of PF which cannot be fulfilled by the teacher's comments. This is because, generally speaking, the teacher usually has to deal with large numbers of students in one class, and because he/she is the authority in that class and students have no choice but to incorporate his/her comments without any negotiation; thus, a few shortcomings are inevitably encountered. The roles PF can perform which teacher feedback cannot are first, that of increasing the student writer's sense of having an audience, and thus stimulating motivation (i.e., it leads to the creation of an essential component of motivation; see section 2.1.2). In this regard, learners expect the teacher to understand whatever they write no matter how weak their writing is, but they do not expect their peers to be able to do so; therefore, writing for peers is likely to receive more care. Secondly, reading peers' writing can raise the individual student's awareness of his/her own problems. It can also encourage collaborative learning and promote ownership of students' texts because the writer is the one to decide which comments to incorporate. These roles performed by PF can make student writers less reliant on the teacher and more confident in themselves (Tsui & Ng, 2000).

On the other hand, Rollinson (2005) set out some of the disadvantages of PF. For example, reading someone's work, developing comments, negotiating meaning etc. can be time-consuming. Another disadvantage is that some students may not be aware of the value of their peers giving them feedback on their own work (Hyland, 2003b; Rollinson, 2005), which may result from their not being comfortable with the notion of receiving feedback from their fellow students (Rollinson, 2005). Furthermore, one of the common problems associated with peer feedback, especially in a second

language context, is the fact that learners tend to comment on micro level issues and do not pay much attention to macro level issues (Keh, 1990; Hyland, 2003b). In addition, more experienced learners tend to question the validity of their colleagues' comments (Leki, 1990; Hyland, 2003b). Reluctance on the part of students to pass critical comments on each other's work can also be observed, and this may prevent them from benefiting from this technique (Clifford, 1999; Papinczak, Young & Groves, 2007). To conclude, Rollinson (2005) suggests that the practice of PF can be improved, arguing that some of the aforementioned problems can be alleviated by creating a proper setting for groups with clear effective procedures, in addition to *adequate training*. In this study Rollinson's perspective was taken into account, and training in the use of PF and attempts to improve its procedures with the aim of making them as effective as possible were included in the intervention, as will be discussed later on in this chapter.

Critical thinking and peer feedback

Having discussed PF technique and its advantages and disadvantages, it is important now to discuss critical thinking and to examine how PF affects it. Writing teachers commonly emphasise the importance of equipping learners with critical thinking skills. Critical thinking from an educational perspective is defined as "...a complex process of reflection that helps individuals become more analytical in their thinking and professional development" (Phan, 2010: 284). Critical thinking is an important concept that *motivates* learners to learn, which facilitates thinking and critical analysis in the learning process, and which consequently allows one to become an expert in one's own profession (Phan, 2010). Phan (2010) argues that critical thinking functions as a dynamic interactive system of teaching and learning, which is seen as a strategy used by learners in order to learn, and is used as a cognitive strategy of self-regulation.

It emerges from the practice of reflective thinking (Leung & Kember, 2003; Phan, 2007), which has been shown to have a positive impact on a student's progress (Lee & Loughran, 2000).

It has been emphasised by a large number of researchers that PF can be an extremely effective approach when used correctly — for instance, by providing proper training in how to critically analyse written texts (Bruffee, 1978; Lockhart & Ng, 1995; Paulus, 1999; Lundstrom & Baker, 2009). In this sense, it is proposed that one important reason for teachers to employ PF in their classrooms is that it can promote critical and reflective thinking skills (McMahon, 2010). McMahon (ibid.) also concludes that PF can encourage the development of a sense of criticality when used *formatively*. In brief, PF can be used to equip learners with critical skills that they can use to evaluate their own written work (Bell, 1991; Tang & Tithecott, 1999; Braine, 2003).

Just as producing effective feedback is associated with the skill of critical thinking, developing a sense of criticality requires the acquisition of the ability to review texts at a macro level, and to identify any logical gaps, problems in the organisation or any other issues that may weaken the argument (Thompson, 2002; Ferris, 2004). Here it is argued that being able to provide effective feedback to fellow students, particularly with regard to macro level features, is considered an essential skill for producing a piece of writing of high quality and in order to succeed in an academic context in general (Gieve, 1998; Thompson, 2002); it is also one which should help learners to improve their writing and reviewing skills (Lundstrom & Baker, 2009). When learners learn how to review others' texts effectively, it is very likely that they will become better at reflecting critically upon their own work, and at locating the parts that need improvement (Rollinson, 2005); this stems from the fact that allowing students to engage critically with the assessment criteria is linked to producing effective feedback (McMahon, 2010).

2.9.2 Training and procedures for peer feedback

It was mentioned earlier that learners should be given adequate training and clear and effective procedures in order to make the practice of PF more effective (see section 2.9.1). In this regard, studies of PF have revealed that novice learners tend to focus mainly on micro level features when commenting on a peer's written work, and seem to neglect comments on structure and content (e.g., Leki, 1990; Mangelsdorf & Schlumberger, 1992). This view is in line with that of Flynn (1982), who speculates that this might be the result of a lack of critical awareness of the criteria used. Several studies of PF emphasise the importance of learners providing adequate, i.e., non-judgmental and polite, feedback (e.g., Tang & Thitecott, 1999). However, a few studies have stressed the importance of training learners to focus on macro level issues when giving feedback, and to recognise this as adequate feedback (Van Steendam et al., 2010). One way of improving the quality of PF is by training learners to use specific criteria, when commenting on a written text, that relate to the quality of the feedback (Gielen et al., 2010a). This training can take the form of observation of an expert who follows already designed stages when commenting on a text.

In 2006, Min examined the effect of training in PF on the type and quality of students' revisions. The subjects of the study were enrolled on three writing cycles (two semesters, 18 weeks each). Training took place in the second and third writing cycles. In each of the two writing cycles the subjects were trained for two hours in class and half an hour outside the class in a one-to-one conference with the teacher. Each writing cycle was constructed with the following sequence: brainstorming, first draft, PF, second draft, oral presentation and peer response, teacher-student feedback on the second draft, third draft, teacher written comments on the third draft and lastly, final draft.

Min's (2006) in-class modelling: this took place before peer reviewing of the first drafts of the second and third cycles. The teacher provided the learners with already written essays by previous students, and used a think-aloud method to demonstrate out loud in front of the students how to provide comments by using the following procedures: *clarifying writers' intentions* (e.g., do you mean...? are you saying...?), *identifying the source of problems*, *explaining the nature of problems* (why it is problematic), and finally, *making specific suggestions*.

The topics they wrote about were: advantages and disadvantages of..., factors contributing to X success...etc. PF was carried out during class time, and learners had to revise their drafts using peer comment for a week. Teacher-reviewer conferences took place after each of the last two training cycles. The teacher collected drafts, revisions and reviewers' comments. The teacher examined these three parts carefully and discussed the problematic issues in the comments with reviewers. For example, if a reviewer did not follow the given procedures when giving comments or did not justify his or her identification of certain problems with the text, the teacher went over them with the reviewer.

The results of this study show that revisers incorporated 43% of the given PF comments into their revised drafts before training, and 77% after training. The study concluded that since more comments were incorporated after training and these were of a better quality, extensive training can have a positive impact on EFL learners' revisions and text quality (further details of how these findings relate to the current study are provided in section 2.10).

2.9.3 Learners and macro & micro levels in peer feedback

As stated earlier, studies of PF using face-to-face encounters show that learners focus mainly on *micro issues* in writing (Mangelsdorf & Schlumberger, 1992; Jones et al.,

2006), especially in the case of ‘novice’ learners who are not provided with any sort of training (Van Steendam et al., 2010). In ESL contexts, writers differ in their revision strategies depending on the level of their skills; for instance, an unskilled writer may see the revision process as error correction, i.e., revision of micro level features (Chenoweth, 1987). Various researchers have speculated as to why learners tend not to address macro issues, and explain that this results from their being *preoccupied* with the linguistic demands of the text when reviewing, which can lead them to ignore other issues in the text, i.e., macro issues (Broekkamp & Bergh, 1996; Chenoweth & Hayes, 2001; Van Steendam et al., 2010).

Accordingly, several ESL researchers and instructors argue that learners should pay more attention to macro than to micro issues (Chenoweth, 1987), especially as research (e.g., Chenoweth, 1987) suggests that this is what more skilled writers tend to do in respect of their own writing. Berg (1999: 220), for instance, states that a “...successful revision involves a focus on issues of meaning and rhetorical aspects of text, an ability to detect mismatches between intended and understood meaning, and a supply of viable text alternatives”. Nevertheless, peers who fail to focus on macro issues when giving feedback should not be deemed to be unsuccessful (Leki, 1990; Min, 2005).

2.10 Empirical studies on PF

The literature includes an enormous number of studies that have investigated the field of PF as a collaborative learning technique in writing classrooms. There is not space here to examine all of these studies, so those which are of particular relevance to the current study have been selected. In this section, studies that were seen to have a close

connection to the theoretical framework of the current study are presented, with the aim of providing proper justification for the design of the current study. The aims, background, methodological designs, data collection instruments, and results of these selected studies are examined below.

In earlier studies, and according to Paulus (1999), the effect of teacher FB and PF and the revision process on students' writing was undetermined; therefore, her study investigated the effect of these two sources of feedback on students' writing. She involved 11 undergraduate ESL students in a 10-week study, during which they wrote 3 essays. For each essay, three drafts were submitted. Subjects were grouped in pairs and required to comment on the first draft using an evaluation form. After developing the second draft, the teacher/researcher provided feedback, and required the students to revise their work accordingly. Therefore, the subjects received feedback from both peers and the teacher on both macro and micro levels, and developed 3 drafts on 3 topics each. The subjects were given a peer feedback checklist, the aim of which was to direct their attention to the macro level, though they were also required to provide micro level feedback. In analysing the findings, Paulus categorised the type and source of the revisions made, and evaluated the first and final drafts. She also recorded students' verbal reports during revision sessions. Her study revealed that the students' own changes were mainly at the surface level, and that teacher and peer feedback (jointly) helped in establishing more meaning-level changes. Furthermore, writing multiple drafts resulted in improving the overall quality of the essays. Points of relevance to our study is the fact that Paulus's study used successful scoring rubrics (adapted in our study); students worked in pairs; peers used evaluation forms, and used verbal protocols as a tool for data collection.

Min (2006) examined the impact of training in PF on the type and quality of EFL students' revisions, and on the ratio of accepted peer comments on the part of the

students. The subjects were 18 undergraduate EFL students who were enrolled on a one-semester writing course. This study used a one-group approach. There were three writing cycles, and the training took place during the second and third cycles. Each subject received 5 hours of training divided between the second and third cycles. Subjects were required to provide both macro and micro level feedback. Min provided the subjects with a guidance sheet, which attempted to direct their attention to the macro level. The subjects of the study developed 4 essays, two drafts each. For data collection, both qualitative (interviews with two independent raters, investigating their views on the types of revision which enhanced text quality), and quantitative (the number of comments used before and after the training) methods were used. In addition, to analyse the findings of the study, the researcher asked the learners to write a fourth essay (essays of around 230 words in length), on which peer comments were then given. Learners were given a week to finalise their drafts. The drafts, revisions and peers' written feedback on both the first and fourth essays were collected. The results indicated that the number of peer comments incorporated in the second drafts was significantly higher than prior to PF training. Additionally, the quality of peers' comments had significantly improved after training. The researcher recommended the introduction of extensive training in PF, for the reason that it can have a positive impact on the quality of learners' revisions and texts. Points of relevance to our study are the fact that Min used systematic PF training procedures (adopted in our study); peers used evaluation forms; students wrote essays of around 230 words in length; two raters were involved, and documentary evidence was used for data collection.

In an undergraduate Chinese EFL context, Yang et al. (2006) conducted a comparative study of teacher and peer feedback in writing classes. They explained that they carried out this study because the focus in their context was on passing the examination, and the students are usually taught in large groups, which usually leads to limited

provision of feedback. Therefore, their study examined whether PF could provide a means of addressing the issue of the lack of feedback. Two groups were assigned — one received feedback from the teacher (41 students) and the other received feedback from the students (38 students). The duration of the study was 16 weeks, and subjects were required to develop 3 multi-draft essays. Data were collected from the subjects' written texts, and from questionnaires, video recordings and interviews. The findings showed that subjects used both teacher and peer feedback to improve their texts. However, teacher feedback was more likely to be incorporated and led to greater improvements in writing. Points of relevance to our study in Yang et al.'s study are the sample size used, the duration of the study, and the use of documentary evidence, questionnaires and interviews for data collection.

Alhazmi and Schofield (2007) conducted a study of 51 Saudi ESL undergraduate students. The duration of the study was 11 weeks. The aim of their study was to improve low proficiency learners' writing skills through enforcing self-revision and peer revision techniques in a context that adopted traditional teaching methods. A checklist was used in their study which focused mainly on the macro level features of writing. The subjects of this study were required to provide revisions with regard to both macro and micro level features. As the study adopted an action research approach, there were two groups, self-revision and peer revision groups, and no control group was used for the purpose of comparison. The subjects were required to develop 3 writing tasks with two drafts each: a total of six drafts. In the PF group, subjects gave and received feedback in pairs. Data were collected from drafts, comments and individual interviews. Interviews were carried out in the learners' mother tongue, which was Arabic. The findings were that the learners could not be persuaded to focus on the macro level, and that they still focused on the micro level as they had originally been taught to do. There was nevertheless a slight improvement in

the subjects' drafts, and the learners had an overall positive attitude towards the intervention, with the majority showing a preference for writing collaboratively. This study is found relevant to our study because it used a similar sample size; peer evaluation forms were used; an action research approach was adopted; it did not employ a control group, and it used interviews (carried out in L1) and documentary evidence for collecting the data.

Lundstrom and Baker (2009) investigated the benefits of PF for those who gave the feedback rather than for those who received it in an ESL writing context. The purpose of their study was to determine what is more beneficial for writing development — to give or to receive PF. The subjects of the study were 91 undergraduate students enrolled on an intensive English course. The duration of the study was one academic term. This study also investigated the effect of PF on different proficiency levels. The experimental groups were of two types: those who gave PF but did not receive any PF (experimental group), and those who received PF but did not give any (control group). Pre- and post-tests were used to measure learners' progress over the term. The analysis (using Paulus's (1999) scoring rubrics) showed that the differences in the pre- and post-test results of the students who gave feedback were greater than the differences in the results of those who merely received it. The study also revealed that those who gave PF and who were of a lower proficiency level made more progress than those who gave PF and had a higher proficiency level. Although the experimental group (the givers) improved significantly, the improvement was slightly higher with macro level features than with micro level features. The duration of Lundstrom and Baker's study, the employment of Paulus's (1999) scoring rubrics, and the use of pre- and post-tests, are seen as relevant points to our study.

Grami's (2010) study aimed to investigate the effects of introducing PF to undergraduate Saudi ESL students on their writing. The duration of the study was

three months divided into three stages and involving 73 students. He investigated the shift in subjects' perceptions of PF before and after the treatment, using questionnaires, interviews, and pre- and post-tests. The first phase involved all 73 students through the use of the questionnaires. The pre-test, PF treatment and post-tests were administered during the second phase, involving 12 students. The post-questionnaire was administered to these 12 students during the third stage. Teacher feedback and PF were given simultaneously with regard to macro and micro level features. The results of the first phase revealed that the teacher's written feedback was approved of. However, the subjects were reluctant to accept feedback from their peers. The subjects' main objection to PF was that they could not accept feedback from peers who were of a lower linguistic level than the teacher. However, after practice with PF technique the findings from the post-questionnaire and post-interviews revealed that the subjects' overall perceptions of PF became more positive, and that learners accepted this technique as part of their writing instruction. Additionally, it impacted on the learners in a way that improved their existing skills (e.g., communicative skills) and helped them to acquire new ones (e.g., evaluative skills). And although both groups showed improvement over their pre-test performance, the experimental group outperformed the control group. Points of relevance to our study are: the duration of the study, and the fact that it used pre- and post-tests, pre- and post-questionnaires, and interviews for data collection.

Hu and Lam (2010) investigated whether PF can be considered to be an effective pedagogical activity in a Chinese L2 writing context, and whether factors such as perceptions of the influence of PF on writing, previous experience, feedback preference and beliefs, relate to its pedagogical effectiveness as an activity. The subjects were 20 postgraduate students enrolled on an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) programme, and the investigation lasted 12 weeks. The subjects were required

to write four assignments, three drafts each. PF was given on the first draft, and teacher feedback was given on the second. The first drafts, peer comments and revised drafts were collected as data for the study, as well as questionnaire and interview data. The findings revealed that there were significant improvements in the revised drafts, and that the level of learners' interest in PF did not affect the effectiveness of PF as an activity. Additionally, PF was generally accepted as a "socioculturally appropriate pedagogical activity" in a Chinese L2 context. The use of questionnaires, interviews and documentary evidence are seen as points of relevance to our study.

Using an action research approach, McMahon (2010) sought to analyse a common problem identified in previous PF studies that students could be reluctant to participate for fear of appearing critical (as discussed above in section 2.9.1 on the general benefits and limitations of PF). He observed that this reluctance led the students to act as a learning audience rather than as a learning community. The subjects of this study were undergraduate social science students enrolled on an education module. As this study was carried out over four years, four cohorts were examined, with more than 20 students in each cohort. During the fourth cohort, a self-assessment technique was involved as an additional technique to PF. No control group was used in this study. The focus was on helping the students to generate high quality feedback for their peers. The subjects were divided into groups, and they were required to provide comments on their classmates' performances in written essays. The main research technique was observation and reflection by the researcher, but data were also collected using questionnaires and written evidence, such as students' written comments. McMahon's study revealed that by the end of the intervention the students had become participants who produced immediate, reflective and useful feedback. They had also become more enthusiastic about taking part in the process, as opposed to feeling uncomfortable, as they had at the beginning. The key factors in bringing

about this change were the facts that the feedback was provided formatively rather than summatively; that proper training was provided in how to use assessment criteria in the peer feedback technique, and that training was given in how to use and receive peer feedback. The study concluded that PF can generate more positive results when used jointly with self-assessment techniques, for the reason that it can play a role in motivating learners to improve their written work. The fact that the study was a piece of action research in which a control group was not employed, and the fact that the researcher used his own observations, questionnaires and documentary evidence to collect the data are seen as points of relevance to our study.

Zhao's (2010) study was a comparative study comparing peer and teacher feedback. The subjects involved in this study were 18 undergraduate students enrolled on a 16-week writing course. He investigated learners' use and understanding of both forms of feedback. He argued that learners may use the feedback, but not necessarily with full understanding of why it was given. As the feedback was given at both macro and micro levels, he collected data using three research methods, namely content analysis of the feedback provided, interviews designed to investigate learners' understanding of this feedback, and interviews designed to investigate the factors that affected their responses to the feedback. The students worked in pairs to give feedback on the first drafts, and then the teacher gave feedback on the second drafts. The results suggested that the subjects incorporated more of the teacher feedback than that provided by peers. The study revealed that the learners had incorporated a larger percentage of teacher feedback into their redrafts without understanding its value or significance, however. Both the amount of the incorporated feedback and the level of understanding were mainly determined by interviews. Additionally, learners accepted teacher feedback passively, and the use of their mother tongue on the part of the students when giving PF was considered facilitative in terms of ensuring better interaction. The study

concluded that the learners' understanding of the feedback provided should be given a relative value when developing writing proficiency. The duration of Zhao's study, the use of pair work, the use of documentary evidence, and the use of interviews for investigating how students treated the PF they received, are seen as points of relevance to our study.

Albeshar (2011) carried out a study to investigate the effectiveness of collaborative learning with 48 ESL Saudi undergraduate students in writing classes. The duration of the study was 3 hours a week for 11 weeks. The aim of his study was to determine who produced better texts in terms of both macro and micro level features — those who worked individually or those who worked collaboratively. Additionally, the aim was to determine whether collaborative learning had a positive impact on learners' attitudes and perceptions. The subjects worked in small groups and PF was given in these groups at the *revising* and *editing* stages of the process approach during each session. This study used two groups: an experimental (23 students) and a control (25 students) group. The study used pre- and post-questionnaires and pre- and post-tests, and 4 subjects were randomly selected for interview at the end of the study. The findings showed that the learners had improved their writing at the macro level as a result of collaborative work, in which an expert was included. However, collaborative learning had not helped the students to improve at the micro level. The questionnaires and the interviews revealed that students in the experimental group held more positive attitudes towards collaborative learning and towards macro level features (but not micro level features) after their involvement in collaborative writing. The overall conclusion of Albeshar's study was that collaborative learning helped learners to improve their texts and to feel more positive about writing. Points of relevance in Albeshar's study are the use of the process approach to essay writing, the use of pre- and post-questionnaires, pre- and post-tests, and interviews.

In conclusion, the empirical studies included in this section have been selected with the aim of providing justification for the design of the current study. The points of relevance which were highlighted in each study justify the current study's use of, for instance, the data collection instruments, sample size, process approach, scoring rubrics, duration of the study, and training of the participants in using the peer feedback technique. The fact that the other researchers had utilised these aspects in their studies encouraged me to use them in the current study.

2.11 The current study

This section deals with the rationale for making certain decisions and selections when designing this study. Principally, it draws attention to the reasons behind the following: the selection of the process approach for the study; the forbidding of *peer* micro feedback; deciding on what are macro and what are micro level features in relation to the scoring rubrics employed, and deciding on what constitutes good quality in writing. This section thus prepares the reader for the following chapter, in which the research methodology is described.

Selecting the process approach

As this research was concerned with introducing PF to learners in order to improve the quality of their essay writing, the *process approach* to writing appeared to be the most appropriate for use in the intervention. It was selected because PF technique is a common component of this approach (Paulus, 1999). Additionally, it can allow effective use of PF technique because it allows for the receiving of feedback, for

making revisions and for constant evaluation (Lundstrom, 2006). PF consists of the giving and receiving of feedback, and one of the stages of the process approach is editing, in which PF technique can be utilised (Storch, 2005). The approach also allows the teacher to be involved as a source of FB; and this study suggests a new form that requires both the teacher and the learner to be involved in the process of FB provision, by which more development can be established at meaning level (i.e., at macro level). In summary, the nature of the process approach meant it was the approach best suited to this study.

Forbidding PF error correction

In the literature the issue of error feedback provision still appears to be a debatable area, with prominent researchers either favouring or rejecting it (e.g., Truscott & Ferris), supporting their position with empirical evidence (although the majority favour its provision). However, I believe that the situation may be different when it comes to peer-to-peer *micro* feedback. In other words, error correction can have negative effects on learners, but not providing any such feedback may be inappropriate, as evidence from the literature suggests (see section 2.4.1). Therefore, in a PF situation, I believe that having peers comment on micro level aspects may affect the use of the technique negatively, and that it should thus be used carefully *by the teacher* in order to mitigate damage as far as possible. This is in addition to the fact that learners have a preference for receiving feedback on micro level features from the teacher, which can be linked to the finding that teacher feedback is more effective than PF in improving micro level issues (Zhang, 1985, cited in Hyland & Hyland, 2006a). Therefore, it can be argued that conforming to students' preferences by allowing them

to receive micro FB from the source they prefer (in this case the teacher), but not from their peers, may lead to the effective use of PF technique.

Classifying macro and micro writing features

The decision as to what should be classified as macro level features and what should be classified as micro level features can be quite difficult, and a consensus on this is not likely to be reached easily. There is something of a “grey area” between the two levels which involves aspects that can be deemed as either macro or micro features. For example, some researchers consider cohesive devices as micro level features (e.g., Hyland, 2003b), while others think of them as macro level features (e.g., Faigley & Witte, 1981; Paulus, 1999). Additionally, other problems might be encountered in certain aspects of writing, such as the selection of the appropriate tense of the verb (e.g., present or past) for the sentence, or even in lexical choices: for instance, the use of *thus* or *therefore*. Changes made to these aspects can have an effect at the micro level, and may have an effect at the macro level as well.

In terms of attempting to classify the two levels, Paulus’s (1999) Essay Scoring Rubrics (see appendix VI), were adopted for use in this research, as discussed later in chapter 3, and these rubrics classify writing features into six categories. The first three categories — Organisation/Unity, Development, and Cohesion/Coherence — are deemed to be macro level features, for the reason that changes within these categories affect a written essay at the level of meaning. The other three categories — Structure, Vocabulary and Mechanics — are deemed to be micro level features, because changes at this level do not alter the meaning or add new information to the text (Paulus, 1999). Lundstrom and Baker (2009) used the same scoring rubrics in their study and divided the writing features into macro and micro levels in the same way as this study. This

made it possible to make decisions regarding the effect of PF on each of these two levels. However, neither Lundstrom and Baker (2009) nor the other studies I came across in the area of PF addressed the existence of the “grey area”. This may be because none of them attempted to provide FB on the two levels in isolation from one another as in this study, and therefore, the researchers were not interested in addressing the existence of this problem.

With regard to the cohesive devices mentioned earlier, this researcher supports the latter point of view (i.e., supports those who consider them as macro level features), for the reason that although these devices work at a micro level, they affect a written text at a global level, and their misuse can confuse the reader, which may result in having to re-read a paragraph to reach a correct understanding, or to proceed with a faulty understanding of the message (see section 2.3 for an account of Faigley & Witte’s (1981) taxonomy of revisions). Furthermore, in my view, the other two points mentioned earlier — the use of tenses and the selection of cohesives — can be categorised as micro features. First, Paulus’s rubrics classify lexical choices under the Vocabulary category, which in this study is considered a micro level feature, and the choice between, for example, *thus* and *therefore* is a matter of personal preference since both words carry the same meaning. Second, the use of the appropriate tense (e.g., present or past) can be considered as a micro level feature (Paulus, 1999; Faigley & Witte, 1981), because making a change from past to present does not necessarily alter the meaning or bring new information to the text (please see the example given in the following paragraph).

When FB was given during the second phase of this study, the researcher did not encounter any difficulty in limiting himself to providing micro FB. One reason for this is the fact that the participants’ generated essays were found to be of a less complex nature, in that there was a tendency on the part of the participants to, for example,

avoid using complex sentences and cohesive ties. Additionally, judgments on whether to use present or past tenses were fairly easy to make. For example, one of the essays the participants wrote during the second phase was about computers, and one participant explained the advantages of using a computer by saying “It facilitated many things that were impossible before.” Here it can be simply said that the use of the past tense in the underlined verb this sentence is inappropriate, and that the present tense should have been used. And that this change is seen as a micro level change that did not effect the meaning beyond sentence level.

The participants, on the other hand, would not be expected to encounter difficulty during the second phase in relation to the grey area identified earlier, owing to the fact that they were required to use an evaluation form that classifies macro level features by presenting them in the form of questions. So although there might be uncertainty among linguists about how to resolve issues surrounding features that fall into this grey area, the participants were not asked to make that kind of judgement themselves because they were simply provided with a list of macro level features during the second phase.

Deciding on writing quality

As discussed earlier in section 2.4, there are two views on how good quality in writing should be determined: some people hold the view that a text should have high quality at the *micro* level, while others see a text’s appropriateness at the *macro* level as the criterion of good quality. In this study the second view was adopted to determine the quality of learners’ texts. This is because the new suggested form of PF technique in this study is intended for use by advanced learners at an undergraduate level. And in

advanced writing modules, development at macro level is particularly emphasised, while micro features are given attention in the early stages.

Although the second view was adopted in this research, teacher micro feedback was included for several reasons, one of which was as a precaution in case there were a few students who suffered from a severe lack of linguistic knowledge that required treatment; it was thought that the inclusion of micro feedback provided by the teacher would to some extent support the development of such students at the micro level. Another reason for including it was that students can become preoccupied with micro features when commenting on their peers' essays and thus neglect macro features. Therefore, it was thought that giving them the opportunity to focus on macro features without the fear of not receiving micro FB might lead to development at the macro level. Finally, and as stated earlier, students do have a preference for receiving micro FB from their teacher, and meeting this preference may have a positive impact on their learning.

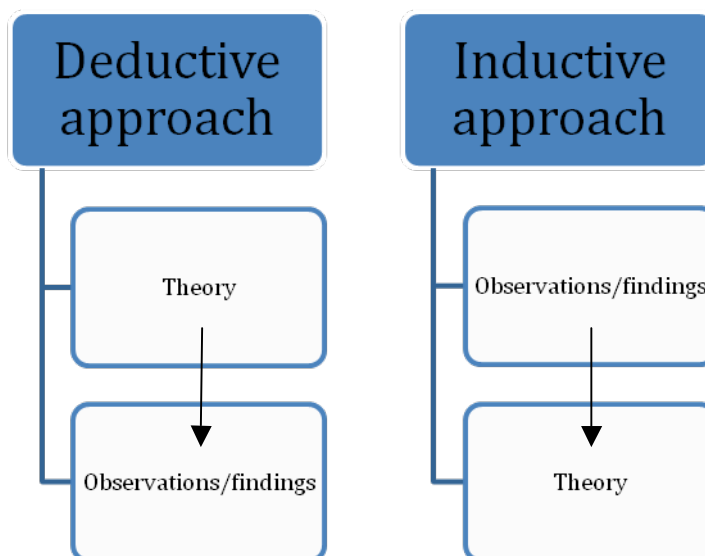
3. Methodology

In this chapter the methodology used in the research, including the research paradigm, action research approach, pre-, mid- and post-questionnaires, mid- and post-interviews, and pre-, mid- and post-tests, is discussed. The selection of subjects for the study, ethical considerations, issues of reliability and validity, the data collection procedures, and the design of the framework for the data collection instruments are also described in this chapter. The broader purpose of the study is to investigate what impact involving learners in using the peer feedback technique, as a collaborative learning technique, based on *macro* level issues, has on their attitudes towards peer feedback and writing, on their motivation to give and use peer feedback and to learn writing, on their writing performance, and on their understanding of what constitutes good writing.

This study investigates the impact of two contrasting forms of PF technique on learners, from two different perspectives. A deductive approach was used in this study, in that the theory guided the research, as opposed to an inductive approach, where theory is seen as an outcome of research (Bryman, 2012). The main difference between deductive and inductive approaches is illustrated in figure 3.1 below. In this study, therefore, the literature guided the research, and helped to generate the hypotheses regarding PF techniques, on the basis of which the methodology and data collection tools were designed. In other words, as described in the previous chapter, the literature on PF techniques and their use provided the theoretical background for this research, in addition to other implications related to the provision of error correction in writing. From this basis, a new form of PF technique is suggested and the

methodological approach adopted to collect the data is described. The chapter begins with a description of the rationale for the study.

Figure 3.1: Deductive and inductive approaches (summarised from Bryman, 2012).



3.1 Rationale for the study

It is reported in the literature that English language programmes at Saudi universities are normally dominated by traditional teaching approaches (see section 1.2), in which an active learning atmosphere is not encouraged. Moreover, the fact that learners are passive recipients of knowledge imparted by the teacher means that they are given less or sometimes no opportunity to interact with each other, nor does it equip them with skills that can be utilised in different learning situations. Writing is seen by the learners to be the most problematic language skill (see chapter 1, section 1.2). As the teacher plays the role of the controller of learning and the only source of information, students in large classes may be suffering from a lack of constructive comments on

their written essays. In other words, the teacher may not have time to give individual attention to his/her student writers on a regular basis (see chapter 1, section 1.2.1).

From this point of view, amongst others, researchers strongly recommend creating a learning atmosphere conducive to collaboration, in which learners can work actively together, helping each other to acquire knowledge, leading to the creation of a student-centred learning situation (see chapter 2, section 2.5). PF is recognised as a collaborative learning technique, and is commonly adopted in writing classes (see chapter 2, section 2.8.2). The literature points out numerous advantages of using PF technique in writing classes (see chapter 2, section 2.9.1) which have led teachers to employ it at different levels of learning.

However, it is also suggested in the literature that there are various problems associated with the way in which PF is used (i.e., conventional PF). This has prompted a few researchers to make attempts to improve its use by enhancing PF procedures or introducing new forms. The problems include a lack of acceptance of peer comments on the part of students and a tendency for students to focus on micro writing features and neglect macro features (see chapter 2, section 2.9.4), which are seen as being particularly important for learners to master in advanced EFL/ESL writing courses.

It was the aim of this study to solve these problems by suggesting a new form of PF, which allows learners to practise giving and receiving PF on macro level writing features alone, with only the teacher being allowed to provide micro level FB. The justification for this is that it has been found that learners are less capable of self-editing lexical errors (see chapter 2, section 2.4.1), and because learners tend to become preoccupied with these lexical errors and neglect content-related features (see chapter 2, section 2.9.4). Additionally, it is particularly important to raise the awareness of learners on advanced writing courses (such as the participants in this

study) of macro writing features; drawing their attention to macro features would give them more exposure to and thus more knowledge of these features. Teacher micro FB is included in the suggested new form because studies have reported that students have a preference for teacher micro FB and would not like it to be withdrawn (see section 2.4.1). In other words, teacher involvement in the provision of FB is preferred by learners. Furthermore, since the work (i.e., FB provision) is divided between the teacher and the learners, the burden should be reduced, and improved outcomes, such as the development of critical thinking, may be expected. Providing more FB on their writing should also make it possible for teachers to become more involved in their students' learning and better acquainted with their needs.

3.2 Research gap

The literature shows that studies on PF technique have focused mainly on the comparison between teacher feedback and PF, and on the question of whether or not the latter can replace the former. A few studies have attempted to improve the practice of this technique by introducing new forms; however, none of them has attempted to shift learners' full attention onto macro writing features when providing PF. A few of these studies have paid more attention to macro than to micro features when giving and receiving PF, but only one study that I am aware of shifted learners' attention completely to macro features (Van Steendam et al., 2010). However, the aims of that study were different from those of the current study. For example, our study measures the impact of employing this technique on linguistic progress; it also measures preference for focusing on macro issues, and impact on attitudes and motivation, neither of which was measured in Van Steendam et al.'s (ibid.) study. Additionally, teacher FB on micro writing features was not included in their study, but it is included

in the current study. Therefore, and based on the assumption that focusing learners on macro writing features when giving and receiving PF can have a positive impact on linguistic and other aspects (such as motivation, attitudes, preferences etc.), which have not so far been investigated by researchers, this was seen as a gap in the literature that was worthy of investigation. The research questions were therefore carefully constructed to probe each aspect of the relevant constructs, including both attitudes and motivation, but also behaviour in using feedback and the eventual effect on writing quality.

3.3 Research questions

R-Q 1: Do students' attitudes and motivation concerning writing change as the course progresses?

Sub-Q 1.1: What are their attitudes towards writing before and after using peer feedback?

Sub-Q 1.2: What is their motivation to write before and after using peer feedback?

R-Q 2: What are the students' attitudes and motivation concerning peer feedback?

Sub-Q 2.1: What are their attitudes towards PF before and after using peer feedback?

Sub-Q 2.2: What is their motivation to use PF before and after using peer feedback?

R-Q 3: What is the effect of PF on students' writing?

Sub-Q 3.1: Do they use, ignore or reject the received feedback?

Sub-Q 3.2: What are the reasons for using, ignoring or rejecting the received feedback?

Sub-Q 3.3: What is the effect on their overall writing quality?

Sub-Q 3.4: How does their understanding of what constitutes good writing change?

R-Q 4: What are the students' attitudes towards giving and receiving feedback from their colleagues based on macro level features?

Sub-Q 4.1: Do students prefer to give and receive feedback based on macro or micro level features?

Sub-Q 4.2: How does the students' preference affect their reaction to the peer feedback they receive?

Sub-Q 4.3: How does the students' preference affect their attitudes and motivation towards peer feedback?

3.4 Research paradigm: *Positivism*

Epistemology is the philosophy of knowledge and how we approach it (Krauss, 2005). Writers have taken different positions with regard to epistemology, one of which is *positivism*, which can be defined as an "...epistemological position that advocates the application of the methods of the natural sciences to the study of social reality and beyond" (Bryman, 2012: 28).

The relationship between theory and research can be described from a positivist perspective. For example, positivists hold that the purpose of theory is to generate hypotheses and then test them, and this makes it possible to assess the validity of established laws (i.e., a deductive approach to science); they also hold that science can be carried out in an objective way, i.e., in a value-free manner (Krauss, 2005; Bryman, 2012). In other words, research into social phenomena can be conducted through generating theories that can be investigated empirically; therefore, genuine knowledge can be obtained through observation and experimentation — that is to say, it is based on practical experience (Cohen et al., 2011).

Moreover, in the positivist approach, reality is captured through quantitative analysis, which reflects objectivity (Cohen et al., 2011). Although it is argued that quantitative methods are the main focus of positivists' research, qualitative methods are also seen to be relevant and can be used jointly with quantitative methods. For example, Giddings (2006) suggests that, “mixed methods could serve as a cover for the continuing hegemony of positivism” (p: 195). In addition, qualitative research can also be used for quantitative purposes (Bryman, 2012); for example, in a study conducted by Zhao (2010), the amount of feedback incorporated by the learners was measured by using interviews (see chapter 2, section 2.10).

The current study may be said to work within the positivism paradigm, since it adopted a deductive approach to investigating a theory. That is, the hypothesis that a suggested new form of PF technique would make a difference in ESL learning was first developed, and tests were then conducted that would confirm or refute this hypothesis; this is in line with the major principle of positivism. In addition, quantitative instruments were employed for the purposes of data collection, and qualitative instruments were also used for quantitative purposes, among other

purposes. Thus, a mixed method approach, which is an approach supported by positivism, was adopted for this study (and accounted for in more detail below).

3.5 Action research

An *action research* approach was deemed to be most applicable for the purposes of this study, since the intention was to improve a particular learning technique and to attempt to present it in the best possible way. In this respect, Mackey and Gass (2005) suggest that action research is an approach which reflects on teaching, and that in teaching it can be used to replace a *conventional* method by a *discovery* method (Cohen et al., 2011).

Such an approach is widely used because it strengthens the relationship between research and practice and improves educators' practice (Gall et al., 2007). Cohen et al. (2011) explain that action research is also called 'practitioner' research and that it "...is a powerful tool for change and improvement at a local level... Its combination of *action* and *research* has contributed to its attraction to researchers, teachers and the academic and educational community alike" (p: 344).

Gall et al. (2007) suggest that action research has seven stages: selecting a focus, taking action, collecting data, analysing the data, modifying action, reflecting, and finally, reporting the research. McLean (1995) defines the stages more simply, and identifies only three: conceptualisation, implementation and interpretation. In this study, concepts relating to PF were formed, leading to the proposal of a new form (conceptualisation); these ideas were then tried out in the field (implementation), and finally, they were analysed and discussed in relation to their impact on learners (interpretation).

However, Gall et al.'s (2007) model of action research suggests that an action research study goes through two cycles of investigation, in that an action is implemented and then modified, to be reintroduced and reflected upon in order to arrive at its final form; McLean's (1995) model, on the other hand, seems to suggest only one cycle of investigation (as described above). The difference between the two models does not indicate disagreement in the views of these researchers; rather it suggests different strategies for conducting action research, and Mclean's model can form part of Gall's model, which allows for the possibility of carrying out research within the practical constraints of an educational context. McLean's model can be seen as useful for situations where it is not possible for the researcher to carry out a second cycle of investigation owing to, for example, time limitations or limited access to participants.

The current study was not designed to have two cycles — it has only one cycle of investigation — simply because there was not sufficient time to carry out a second cycle after the data had been gathered. However, it is possible to take a broader view of the chronology of cycles. For example, having reached certain conclusions in this study, changes could then be made to the current design and reintroduced to similar participants in the future, and then a report can be given of what is effectively a second cycle of investigation. However, since the current design does not have the two or more cycles that are generally seen as typical an action research approach, the current study might more accurately be described as an example of *quasi* action research.

3.6 Subjects of the study

Research quality does not depend only on the appropriateness of the instrumentation used, but also on the suitability of the chosen sample (Cohen et al., 2011). As a result

of the variety of factors (for instance, time and accessibility) that make it difficult for researchers to gather data from an entire population, it is necessary to gather information from a smaller group of the same population which can provide representative knowledge about the whole population (Cohen et al., 2011). It is therefore important for a researcher to consider the representativeness of his/her sample.

According to Bryman (2012) and Cohen et al. (2011), there are two main approaches to sampling: probability and non-probability sampling. In probability sampling, the sample is selected using the random selection method, in which each individual has a chance to be selected, whereas in a non-probability sample this method is not used, which means that some individuals have a greater chance to be included than others. Bryman (2012) and Cohen et al. (2011) also explain that non-probability sampling includes several forms, one of which is *purposive sampling*, in which the researcher selects the individuals in relation to the research questions: i.e., for a specific purpose. Purposive sampling also has several types/approaches, one of which is *typical case sampling*, which produces a sample that “includes the most typical cases of the group or population under study, i.e. representativeness” (Cohen et al., 2011: 157).

Typical case sampling, a type of non-probability purposive sampling approach, as described above, was used in this study. In other words, particular individuals were selected because it was thought they would be most likely to provide data appropriate for answering the research questions. The sample consisted of 41 male undergraduate students in an English department at a Saudi Arabian university, who were specialising in English Language and Literature (i.e., ESL learners), and who were required to complete four years of taught modules at 8 levels.

The writing modules, which are modules of two/three hours per week, are taken at 4 different levels over four academic terms. The first two introductory writing modules (taking place during the 1st and 2nd levels) are designed to enable them to master composition at paragraph level. The third module (taking place during the 3rd level) gives an introduction to essay writing while emphasising the improvement of micro writing features. Finally, level four, which is an advanced level (taking place during the 7th level, 3 hours a week), focuses mainly on enabling students to master essay writing using macro level features in argumentative essays, which is in line with the focus of this study. It should be mentioned here that the previous module (3rd level) was not seen as suitable for this study because it gives a *first-time* introduction to essay writing; therefore, if students taking this module had been selected, the validity of the tests would have been jeopardised. This is because it is likely that the students would have performed badly in the pre-test (which takes the form of an essay) — since they had not yet been taught how to write an essay — and therefore, by the time they undertook the mid- and post-tests, they would probably do better *regardless* of the introduced interventions. On the other hand, students taking the advanced level module (7th level) had already taken the course on basic essay writing and it was assumed that they had formed a fairly similar knowledge basis. Therefore, the advanced module (7th level) was seen to be appropriate for the current study.

3.7 Mixed methods

As mentioned above, because of the diversity of the research questions being investigated in this study that required different sources of data, and because of the variety of the advantages that can be gained from adopting such an approach, a *mixed method* approach was used for this study. In its simplest definition, a mixed method

approach is one in which quantitative and qualitative methods are combined (Punch, 1998; Mackey & Gass, 2005; Gall et al., 2007).

A researcher who reviews both qualitative and quantitative studies on the same phenomenon can obtain richer insights than if he/she reviews a single set of data (Gall et al., 2007). Researchers are increasingly recommending the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods, owing to the fact that they complement each other (Gall et al., 2007). Moreover, Denscombe (2008) and Punch (1998) explain that, at a general level, the reasons for using both quantitative and qualitative methods are to bring out the strengths of the two approaches, and to compensate for the weaknesses of each method. Therefore, using mixed methods to collect data results in more genuine inferences being made about the findings, in more accurate results (Spratt et al., 2004; Denscombe, 2008), and in less bias (Cohen et al., 2011). It can also provide a clearer picture of the investigated phenomenon than if a single approach is used (Spratt et al., 2004; Denscombe, 2008).

This study employed quantitative methods to analyse data obtained from pre-, mid- and post-questionnaires (see appendices II and III), pre-, mid- and post-tests, and to calculate figures for data obtained from interviews and from documentary evidence obtained from participants, while qualitative methods were used to analyse data obtained from students' documentary evidence, comments given by the subjects in the open-ended section of the questionnaires, field notes taken by the researcher and pre- and post-interviews.

3.7.1 Why no control group

According to Mackey and Gass (2005), in a piece of action research, control groups are not typically utilised. Gall et al. list the following disadvantages of using control groups in experimental research: "...participants in experimental research are placed

in different treatment conditions, and thus are not treated equally. The treatment group is likely to receive special training or the opportunity to participate in an innovative program, while the control group receives either nothing or a conventional program. An ethical dilemma exists here that the control group can be viewed as having been treated unfairly by not receiving the special training or innovative program” (p: 71) (see Everston (1989) for an illustrative example).

In this study, a control group was not utilised, partly for the reasons put forward by the researchers mentioned above, and partly because in this study a triangulation method was used which it was expected would increase the validity of the findings, making it unnecessary to obtain evidence from a control group.

Third, other recent studies which have been carried out in a similar context to this study have revealed that the treatment group is likely to demonstrate significant progress (e.g., Albeshier, 2011; Grami, 2010), from which various implications can be deduced. For instance, owing to the dominance of traditional teaching approaches in Saudi educational institutions, introducing any proper interventions can be significantly rewarding; it is thus likely that similar results would be obtained even if a control group was used with which conventional PF was applied as the treatment. It should be noted that it was unlikely that the sample used in this study would be familiar with even the conventional form of PF. Moreover, it can also be argued that this — the likelihood that the treatment group will also show significant results — can be linked to the *Hawthorne effect*. Adair (1984: 334) defines this effect as “The problem in field experiments that subjects’ knowledge that they are in an experiment modifies their behaviour from what it would have been without the knowledge.” Thus, if a control group had been employed in the current study and if there had been any impact from the Hawthorne effect, then both groups might have produced similar results, which could have invalidated the research findings.

Fourth, a control group is used for the purpose of comparing progress between two groups; the design of the current study allowed comparisons to be made between the results obtained from phase 1 (when conventional PF was used) and the results obtained from phase 2 (when the new form of PF was used), thus making the use of a control group unnecessary. Fifth, since this study focused on learners' preferences with regard to the two treatments, it was essential to expose the same students to both forms so that they could reflect on both practices, and provide even more insightful data that would help with the interpretation of the results.

Finally, at the institution where the data were collected, there was only one group of students available for this study. The researcher made an attempt to split the participants into two separate groups in order to employ one of them as a control group; however, this was not possible as they refused to make any changes to their timetable. They explained that any change would cause conflict with their other classes. Therefore, it was not possible to obtain two groups for this study.

On reflection it was decided that the lack of a control group would not be detrimental to the study as all the evidence needed to answer the research questions could be provided by the experimental group.

3.8 Research instruments

In this section the research instruments used in this study are described. These instruments were questionnaires, interviews, documentary evidence, pre-, mid- and post-tests, field notes, and the evaluation checklist; they were all chosen for their ability to provide appropriate and sufficient evidence for answering the research questions. A brief review of the literature on the essential characteristics, and a

description of the design and implementation of each instrument, is provided below. Finally, the links between the data obtained by these instruments and the research questions are described in table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: The relationship between the types of data gathered and the research questions.

Main research questions	Sub-research questions	Sources of data gathered
R-Q 1: Do students' attitudes and motivation concerning writing change as the course progresses?	<p>Sub-Q 1.1: What are their attitudes towards writing before and after using peer feedback?</p> <p>Sub-Q 1.2: What is their motivation to write before and after using peer feedback?</p>	1.1 & 1.2: Questionnaires, interviews and field notes.
R-Q 2: What are the students' attitudes and motivation concerning peer feedback?	<p>Sub-Q 2.1: What are their attitudes towards PF before and after using peer feedback?</p> <p>Sub-Q 2.2: What is their motivation to use PF before and after using peer feedback?</p>	2.1 & 2.2: Questionnaires, interviews and field notes.
R-Q 3: What is the effect of PF on students' writing?	<p>Sub-Q 3.1: Do they use, ignore or reject the received feedback?</p> <p>Sub-Q 3.2: What are the reasons for using, ignoring or rejecting the received feedback?</p> <p>Sub-Q 3.3: What is the effect on their overall writing quality?</p> <p>Sub-Q 3.4: How does their understanding of what constitutes good writing change?</p>	<p>3.1: Questionnaires, interviews and documentary evidence.</p> <p>3.2: Interviews</p> <p>3.3: Questionnaires, interviews, documentary evidence, writing tests, verbal protocols and field notes.</p> <p>3.4: Interviews, writing tests and documentary evidence.</p>

R-Q 4: What are the students' attitudes towards giving and receiving feedback from their colleagues based on macro level features?	Sub-Q 4.1: Do students prefer to give and receive feedback based on macro or micro level features? Sub-Q 4.2: How does the students' preference affect their reaction to the peer feedback they receive? Sub-Q 4.3: How does the students' preference affect their attitudes and motivation towards peer feedback?	4.1, 4.2 & 4.3: Questionnaires and interviews.
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3.8.1 Questionnaires

The questionnaire has become one of the most popular research instruments used in second language research (Dörnyei, 2010). It is the device most frequently employed to collect statistical data. Brown (2001) defines 'questionnaires' as "...any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers" (p: 6). The questionnaire was employed in this study for the following reasons: it was deemed to be the instrument best suited to gathering data appropriate for the nature of the research questions; using it would allow triangulation with other instruments and thus increase the validity of the results; in addition there are several advantages in utilising it which are suggested by the literature, as discussed below.

Questionnaires attract researchers for a number of reasons. For example, they are known to save time, effort and financial resources, as compared to other tools that may require, for example, recording, translating, transcribing, travelling etc. (O'Hanlon, 2003; Opie, 2004; Koshy, 2005; Dörnyei, 2010) (see table 3.3 for a comparison between questionnaires and interviews). Moreover, Denscombe (2003) and Dörnyei (2010) detail other advantages of using a questionnaire, and say that it is known to be

one of the easiest methods to manage, even with large numbers of subjects. In addition, it is versatile, and can be used with groups exhibiting different characteristics, such as gender, age and social class, for example. Questionnaires can also be used to gather data on attitudes and the adequacy of resources (Koshy, 2005; Hopkins, 2008).

Questionnaires can be designed to contain either open-ended or closed questions (Cohen et al., 2011). With regard to the latter, Denscombe (2003), Dörnyei (2010) and Hopkins (2008) suggest that although the construction of this type of question is very difficult, they can produce accurate information and save time in the process of analysis. Responses to open-ended questions, on the other hand, are given in the form of thoughts, and are thus more difficult and time-consuming to analyse (McNiff & Whitehead, 2005). Generally speaking, questionnaires can provide answers to *what*, *where*, *when* and *how* questions, but it is sometimes difficult to obtain responses to *why* questions (Opie, 2004). However, Opie states that as long as this limitation is taken into account, questionnaires can be a very useful tool for collecting data. O'Hanlon (2003: 82) suggests the following guidelines for designing a questionnaire:

- Use simple language which the participants can understand;
- Make the questionnaire and the included items simple to answer;
- Use an attractive format;
- Organise the questionnaire in a manner that is clear and easy to follow;
- Use logical sequencing using transitional tactics when moving from one focus to another;
- Keep away from the use of leading questions;

- Keep away from the use of negative questions;
- If a negative question has to be asked, make sure it is preceded by a positive question;
- Start with a general question to prepare the respondents for the specific ones;
- Explain the purpose of the study briefly in the cover letter.

In this study, closed questions were the type principally used in the questionnaire, with an open section included for the students to provide comments, if any. This is because first, the same questionnaire was distributed at three different stages and was considered to be relatively long, and secondly, the interviews, verbal protocol recordings and field notes provided sufficient qualitative data on the phenomena under investigation.

3.8.2 Pre-, mid- & post-questionnaires

Identical pre-, mid- and post-questionnaires were used to investigate several issues in the study. The pre-questionnaire included an additional first section inquiring about the students' background in writing and PF technique. Using a duplicate questionnaire could be argued to be good practice in longitudinal studies such as this one, but it was decided that this section could be removed in the later stages of the questionnaire, since it did not provide information relevant to the investigation into the changes in participants' views after exposure to the treatments, and I did not wish to confuse the participants with superfluous questions. The second section investigated several areas that corresponded to particular research questions. These areas were first, the students' attitudes and motivation before and after exposure to the conventional and the new forms of peer feedback; second, the students' preferences for micro and macro level feedback when giving and receiving peer feedback; third, the effect of introducing PF

on writing performance, and finally, the extent of the subjects' use of the received feedback.

Mid- and post-questionnaires were used to measure the effect of exposure to the first and second treatments by asking for details on how the students' attitudes, motivation, preferences for macro or micro level feedback, and the effect on writing (in which students reported their beliefs concerning the effect of PF on their writing), and feedback usage, had changed. A *Likert* scale was used to measure the subjects' responses. According to Cohen et al. (2011), the *Likert* scale allows the researcher to measure opinions, quantity and quality; it was thus deemed to be appropriate for use in the questionnaire in this study in order to allow, for example, the measuring of students' views (e.g., attitudes, motivation) and inquiring about the quantity of PF that was used, ignored or rejected. The scale provides a range of responses for each given statement or question in a questionnaire (Cohen et al., 2011). The questionnaire in this research incorporated the categories commonly used for rating scales: *strongly disagree*, *disagree*, *not sure*, *agree* and *strongly agree*. Moreover, key adjectives in each item of the questionnaire were written in **bold** type in an attempt to keep the students focused on the main import of the given statements.

The questionnaire is thus divided into two sections. The first section (as explained earlier), page one, inquires about the subjects' previous experience of PF, and was only included in the pre-questionnaire (see appendix II). The questionnaire was given the general title of "*Peer Feedback Questionnaire*". Below this, a short paragraph is provided which explains the purpose of the study and offers some explanation of the questionnaire, as suggested by O'Hanlon (2003) and Dörnyei (2010). This introductory paragraph was adapted from Dörnyei (2010), with some changes to fit the study. Below the introductory paragraph, explanations of key terms are provided. Two of these key terms – *macro level* and *micro level* - are explained and supported with

examples, with the aim of enabling the participants to understand the statements included in the questionnaire more clearly, and thereby increasing the validity of their answers. There are five items in the first section, including four yes/no questions asking for general information related to the practice of PF, and another question designed to measure their interest in receiving comments on their essays from other students on a scale of one to five.

The second section was included in the pre-, mid- and post-questionnaires. It is divided into five categories, with most of the items being adapted from other studies (see table 3.2), but with a small number specifically designed for this study because, for example, they were central to the novel aspects of this particular study that have not been previously investigated, and were thus not available in other studies. On the other hand, the adapted items were selected because it was thought they would help in achieving the aims of the questionnaire; in addition, they had already been tested in the field and, presumably, been thoroughly checked before publication, which suggests that they are proven to be relatively well constructed. The sections of the questionnaire and the sources of the items are shown in the following table.

Table 3.2: Questionnaire structure and sources of adapted items.

Section 1		
Background questions on PF	Item(s)	Source
	1, 5	Dörnyei (2010)
	2	Grami (2010)
	3, 4	The researcher
Section 2		
Part I) Attitudes	Item(s)	Source

	1,2,3	The researcher
	4,5	Dörnyei (2010)
	6, 9,12	Grami (2010)
	7,8,10	Tsui & Ng (2000)
	11	Li & Steckelberg (2004)
Part II) Motivation	Item(s)	Source
	13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18,19,20, 21,22,23	Alshehri (2009)
Part III) Preferences for macro or micro level	Item(s)	Source
	24	Tsui & Ng (2000)
	25, 26, 27,28	Leki (1991)
	29,30,31	The researcher
Part IV) Effects on writing	Item(s)	Source
	32,33,34,35,36	Tsui & Ng (2000)
	37	Li & Steckelberg (2004)
Part V) Learners' acceptance of PF	Item(s)	Source
	38,39,40	The researcher

In total, 40 items were included in this section. A multi-item scale was used in the first four categories of the second part of the questionnaire. Dörnyei (2010) explains that the use of multi-item scales is crucial in the design of scientific questionnaires, since it increases the validity of the results. When assessing abstract mental variables (e.g., attitudes, interests, beliefs, opinions), slight changes in wording can express different levels of agreement. This problem does not arise when assessing factual aspects, when a single question can produce the correct response (Dörnyei, 2010). Therefore, multi-

item scales were used in order to increase the validity of the results and to allow more accurate measurement of the abstract variables being investigated (e.g., attitudes, motivation). Finally, at the end of the questionnaire, learners were invited to offer any comments they felt were worth adding (open-ended section), and which could be related to any category of the questionnaire or any other aspect of the study; the fact that this was the end of the questionnaire was also indicated by inserting the words “the end” at the bottom of the last page (Dörnyei, 2010).

Although the aim of the questionnaire was to gather data that would allow comparisons to be made between attitudes towards writing and attitudes towards PF technique, and motivation to learn writing and motivation to use PF technique, the number of items in each category was not even. In other words, 3 items were included to gather data related to attitudes towards writing, whereas 8 items were included to gather data related to attitudes towards PF, and a similar distribution of items was given in relation to motivation. This is because it was assumed that investigating the participants’ attitudes towards and motivation to learn writing would be straightforward since they already had prior experience of writing in English; thus three items were likely to provide sufficient data; on the other hand, the PF technique was a new concept that would require deeper investigation, and thus it was deemed necessary to include more items in the questionnaire in order to capture a more accurate picture. Additionally, if the numbers had been even, I would have ended up with a very long questionnaire and would then have had to spend time reducing the overall number of items in order to avoid overloading the participants.

When designing a questionnaire, both negative and positive statements need to be taken into consideration. This is recommended in order to ensure as far as possible that the subjects are not being led to respond either positively or negatively (Dörnyei, 2010). Therefore, the researcher decided to include around 30% negative items — this

percentage was inspired by other research, (e.g., Albeshier, 2011), and followed O'Hanlon's (2003) suggestion of trying to avoid using negative items — in almost every category of the questionnaire. Dörnyei and Csizer (2012) also recommend the avoidance of negative constructions such as 'not', 'doesn't' or 'don't', because responding to such constructions can be problematic, even though they can be readily understood. Therefore, in this study negative adjectives were used in order to form negative statements — an approach which is thought to contribute to the internal validity of the responses (Dörnyei & Csizer, 2012). Examples of these negative adjectives are: *I find writing **difficult***, and *It is **worthless** for me to learn how to use peer feedback*. Finally, the questionnaire was translated into Arabic (see appendix III), which is the mother tongue of the subjects, and then proofread by an Arabic linguist. It was thought that this would contribute to the internal validity of the questionnaire (Dörnyei, 2010).

3.8.3 Tests: pre-, mid- and post-tests

The administering of tests is an approach commonly used by researchers for the purpose of collecting data on individuals, owing to its appropriateness for different contexts; it is a method of obtaining data on aptitudes, progress and aspects of personality (Gall et al., 2007). The subjects of this research were given pre-, mid- and post-tests to measure their progress before and after their exposure to both treatments (i.e., the conventional and the new forms of peer feedback). Their progress was measured, and possible links with other data and measures were explored, in order to investigate the impact of the approach to peer feedback on their writing. The pre-test required the subjects to write an argumentative essay of around 250 words in length before any treatment was introduced. An equivalent test was given in the middle (after exposure to the first treatment) and at the end of the experiment (after exposure to the second treatment) but using different topics. The given topics were as follows: pre-

test: *Is cheating out of control?* mid-test: *Is competition good?* and post-test: *Is homework harmful or helpful?*

Moreover, two assessors were used to evaluate the pre-, mid- and post-tests using Paulus's (1999) rubrics for evaluating essays (see appendix VI). These assessors were used to ensure the validity and reliability of the marking, and to avoid any bias that may have occurred, by taking the average of the two scores (i.e., the average of the assessors' two scores for each test for each student). Several studies have used Paulus's (1999) rubrics for evaluating subjects' essays (e.g., Lundstrom & Baker, 2009; Grami, 2010; Albeshier, 2011). Some of these studies were conducted in a similar context to the current study. The rubrics were carefully designed to ensure that they provided clear and detailed explanations of both macro and micro level writing features. The scoring rubrics give a scale from 1 to 10 where ten is the highest mark. The writing features were categorised on six levels: organisation, development, cohesion/coherence, structure, vocabulary and mechanics. The first three categories were grouped under macro level features, and the latter three as micro level features (see chapter 2, section 2.11). Having such clear and detailed rubrics helped the assessors to establish common ground when assessing the same essay, which contributed to the validity and reliability of the marking.

3.8.4 Interviews

Interviews are generally considered to be one of the most effective ways of exploring people's opinions and ideas, because they allow speech interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009), by means of which the interviewer can probe more deeply into a response given by an interviewee (Mackey & Gass, 2005). Rubin and Rubin (2005) explain that an interview is a conversation between partners that may be extended in order to seek in-depth information about a

certain topic or subject; it also gives people the opportunity to express their feelings (Weiss, 1994). In other words, interviews are used to gather participants' perspectives on what is happening in relation to a particular phenomenon (McNiff & Whitehead, 2005). However, it should be noted that the interview is not used solely for data collection, but also for assessing an individual or individuals, and for testing hypotheses (Cohen et al., 2011; 2007). One of the reasons for using interviews in this study was to test the hypothesis that learners would accept the new suggested form of PF over the conventional form.

Interviews can be used as the main mechanism of data collection by referring back to the original members of a sample to ensure that interpretations made from the data are representative and accurate (Brewerton & Millward, 2001); answers can be recorded and reviewed several times by the researcher in order to produce an accurate record of what was said (Berg, 2007), and this can enhance the reliability of the instrument. A prominent merit of this tool is its flexibility; for instance, it can be used at any stage of the research process — during the initial phase to identify areas that merit more detailed exploration and/or to generate hypotheses, and as part of the piloting or validation of other instruments (Brewerton & Millward, 2001). According to Drew et al. (2006), this has made the research interview an increasingly attractive method of data collection.

Interviews facilitate the obtaining of direct explanations for human actions, and thus make it possible to investigate attitudes in greater depth than other research instruments (O'Hanlon, 2003), which was the case when collecting the data for this study. For instance, in an interview, the interviewer can ensure that the interviewee understands the questions asked by rephrasing them or offering further explanation, which can lead to more appropriate answers; in questionnaires, by contrast, it can be difficult to ensure respondents' clear understanding if the meaning of a question is

found to be vague. Furthermore, interviews can provide the researcher with answers to the question ‘why’, which questionnaires cannot, even if the questionnaires use open questions (Opie, 2004). One reason for this is that respondents may not feel confident about expressing themselves on paper (Opie, 2004). Additionally, in an interview, a researcher can ask for additional information if a response is found vague, incomplete, or even digressing from the question asked (Mackey & Gass, 2005), whereas in questionnaires, seeking clarifications from the respondents afterwards can be difficult. Moreover, some respondents find speaking in an interview preferable to filling in a questionnaire (Mackey & Gass, 2005), especially if a respondent has difficulty writing. The similarities and differences between interviews and questionnaires are summarised in table 3.3 below.

Table 3.3: Summary of relative merits of interview compared with questionnaire (Tuckman, 1972, cited in Cohen et al., 2011: 412).

Consideration	Interview	Questionnaire
1- Personal need to collect data	Requires interviewers	Requires a secretary
2- Major expense	Payment to interviewers	Postage and printing
3- Opportunity for response-keying (personalisation)	Extensive	Limited
4- Opportunities for asking	Extensive	Limited
5- Opportunities for probing	Possible	Difficult
6- Relative magnitude of data reduction	Great (because of coding)	Mainly limited to rostering
7- Typically, the number of respondents who can be reached	Limited	Extensive
8- Rate of return	Good	Poor
9- Sources of error	Interviewer, instrument, coding,	Limited to instrument and sample

	sample	
10- Overall reliability	Quite limited	Fair
11- Emphasis on writing skills	Limited	Extensive

In an effective interview, the interviewer should show empathy and interest and be attentive. Moreover, the interviewer should be neutral and not express his/her own opinions, and should be careful with regard to expressing feelings, either by showing surprise or disagreeing with a response (Hopkins, 2008). Showing a sense of ease is also important in that this can affect a subject's response (Hopkins, 2008). These tips concerning an effective interview were taken into consideration when the interviews for this research were conducted, and this could have increased the validity of the results.

According to Mackey and Gass (2005), there are three types of interview in second language research: *structured* interviews (in which a researcher uses the same set of questions with all the interviewees in order to compare their answers), *semi-structured* interviews (in which the researcher uses the same set of questions but has the flexibility to probe for more answers by asking additional questions), and *unstructured* interviews (in which the researcher does not prepare questions, but rather, the questions develop naturally through casual conversation and subject to the researcher's steering and guidance).

In this study semi-structured interviews were used in order to make comparisons between students' responses, with their own responses and with those of each other, before and after exposure to the second treatment (i.e., the new form of PF). In addition, the researcher occasionally had to digress from the questions in order to probe into students' responses for more information. For example, when some

questions were asked (e.g., question 3 - *Do you think your own writing changed as a result of PF? If so, how do you think it changed, and what was it about PF that led to those changes?*), on some occasions the interviewees reported unexpected issues (e.g., often in relation to traditional teaching methods); the researcher thus investigated such responses by asking the interviewee to elaborate, as this made it possible to gather interesting data. A transcript of the interviews is included in appendix IX.

Pre- and post-interviews

At the end of the first phase (i.e., after exposure to the first treatment), semi-structured mid-interviews were carried out with 11 *volunteer* subjects. Therefore, the interview sampling technique used was (as discussed earlier in section 3.6) a non-probability sampling approach. It should be noted here that this method of sampling was selected simply because those 11 subjects were the only ones who agreed to participate in the interviews. However, the sampling technique imposed some limitations on how representative their views were likely to be of the rest of the group, taking into account the fact that seven of them were of middle proficiency levels and the other four were of high proficiency levels (as their pre-tests scores indicate). The performance levels of those 11 interviewees in the writing tests gave an indication of the fact that they were to a certain extent representative of middle and high proficiency students. However, what is lacking is information about the low proficiency students.

The interviewees were asked 10 questions (see appendix I). Additionally, after the second phase, post-interviews were conducted, asking the same questions as with the mid-interviews, and using the same 11 subjects. This was done in order to be able to measure any changes in the subjects' responses to the interview questions after exposure to both treatments. The ten questions were asked in order to obtain data and establish links with data already obtained from other sources. These interviews

provided evidence of the students' attitudes towards writing and PF, motivation to write and towards using PF, as well as their preferences for giving and receiving either macro or macro and micro level feedback. They were also used to find out whether the learners use, reject or ignore the feedback given by their peers, to what extent, and why. These themes (i.e., attitudes, motivation...etc.) were designed in a way that would provide evidence that would corroborate the data gathered from the questionnaire. Finally, in the final question, each subject was allowed to make any additional comments on any aspect of the study.

3.8.5 Diaries/Field notes

In second language learning contexts, diaries can provide useful data on various aspects, including "...individual learners' and instructors' insights into their own learning and teaching process, their self- and other-comparisons, decision-making processes, the process of development (or not) over time, attitudes towards classroom learning and teaching, the use of strategies, and the recognition and use of feedback" (Mackey & Gass, 2005: 204). They are used to record both the action and the learning (McNiff & Whitehead, 2005), and can be used in a piece of action research to collect data related to the research questions (McNiff & Whitehead, 2005). Hopkins (2008) and Koshy (2005) explain that teachers can see their development through these "fascinating biographical records" (Hopkins, 2008: 105). The recorded notes can reflect general impressions of the class, the atmosphere in the classroom and any events that might occur, and reactions to classroom problems (Hopkins, 2008). It should be pointed out that diaries are also referred to as 'field notes' (Koshy, 2005), and that field notes that are taken every day can form a diary (Hopkins, 2008).

Too many observations may be recorded at the beginning, but these are usually narrowed down as the research progresses. The notes can be used to record what

happens and why, and where ideas related to the research process occurred, and to record significant events occurring during particular situations (Koshy, 2005). It is recommended that these notes be recorded immediately after the lesson (Hopkins, 2008), and that the entries be kept short (Koshy, 2005). The quality of diaries can be enhanced by scheduling regular times for writing, and by providing guidelines for the range and amount of each entry (Mackey & Gass, 2005).

Using field notes has advantages and disadvantages. For example, some of the advantages are that notes are simple to keep with no need for external help, and help to relate incidents to each other and explore emerging issues (Hopkins, 2008). In addition, they can be used to check the progress being made on the project, and to supplement other sources (Koshy, 2005). In contrast, some of the disadvantages are that in-class conversations are impossible to record using field notes, that field notes can be time-consuming to write and that they can be subjective (Koshy, 2005; Hopkins, 2008).

In this study, field notes were taken on a regular basis while the participants were being exposed to both treatments. Eventually they formed a diary from which data were taken and analysed and then used to support other findings in this study. During every session when the data were being collected, the researcher was observing the learners' interactions, discussions, performance, homework submissions, reactions etc., and occasionally seeking clarifications with regard to prominent phenomena (e.g., disagreements with particular feedback given by peers). These observations were usually written up immediately after each session, following Hopkins' (2008) recommendation, or occasionally during the session, if time allowed.

3.8.6 Documentary evidence

In action research, gathering documentary evidence such as students' work can be useful (O'Hanlon, 2003; Koshy, 2005; Hopkins, 2008). Such evidence can act as background information to the context of the study. It can also be informative when comparing what has been reported in the literature and what has been found in the project under consideration (Koshy, 2005; Hopkins, 2008). Documents can provide evidence that help to complete the bigger picture of the study. Additionally, having access to students' written work can help the researcher to investigate their progress over the course of time (Koshy, 2005). Such documentary evidence can also provide deep insights into the learning process (O'Hanlon, 2003).

There are several advantages of using documentary evidence in action research. For example, it can provide a deep insight into particular situations; it can provide evidence without much effort being made, in the sense that it can be easily collected (e.g., from the respondents), and it can be used to support other findings (Koshy, 2005; Hopkins, 2008). Furthermore, it can help, for example, in illuminating issues surrounding a particular teaching method (Hopkins, 2008). On the other hand, some of the disadvantages are that although it is easy to collect, it can be difficult to analyse because it requires rigorous analysis and sorting of the data; as a result it can be said that using documentary evidence consumes a good deal of time (Koshy, 2005). Moreover, since there are different types of documentary evidence, personal choice can affect the selection of these documents (Koshy, 2005); thus, a researcher can include or exclude material based on his/her personal desire.

This study used multiple drafts of students' essays and the evaluation checklists filled in by the respondents in order to analyse the amount of peer feedback that was incorporated in their second drafts. In addition, the students were asked to complete a percentage form (see appendix VIII) after they had incorporated comments made by

their fellow students, in which information about the amount of macro and micro PF used, ignored or rejected was stated. These were used in conjunction with the reported percentages in the interviews, which made it possible to obtain more precise results.

3.8.7 Verbal protocols

Russo et al. (1989) note that it is necessary to trace changes in information (i.e., information processing), with the tracing of data related to cognitive processes being particularly important. They further suggest that the verbal protocol think-aloud method is a source of such data. Henning et al. (2009) explain that listening to student talk allows a thorough assessment of, and opportunities of access to, the sophisticated thinking skills of students. In other words, this technique for collecting data has been widely used by L1 and L2 researchers for the reason that it can provide insight into aspects that other data instruments cannot address, such as cognitive processes (Bowles, 2010).

Simply put, this technique involves the recording of learners' reflections/comments while completing a particular task (Bowles, 2010; Russo et al., 1989), during which they are asked about what is going on in their minds (Mackey & Gass, 2005). Macaro (2001) suggests that, in a verbal protocol session, learners should understand both what they have to do and the aim of the session (i.e., to observe their thinking strategies). Macaro (ibid.) also suggests avoiding phrases such as "Are you sure?" and "That's great" and recommends using phrases such as "What makes you say that?" which signal a neutral stance concerning students' responses. He also suggests that the researcher should avoid directing responses, or even intimidating respondents. These tips were taken into consideration when recording the sessions for this research, with the intention of creating a relaxing atmosphere, and consequently eliciting more reliable findings.

During the second phase, volunteer students were selected to be recorded while giving and receiving PF to/from fellow students. Recording took place in a private room so the students being recorded were able to feel comfortable when performing, in addition to the fact that it allowed good quality recording. Each pair of students sat with the researcher in an isolated room, taking turns at giving and receiving the feedback (in that one student gave PF and the other discussed/negotiated this PF) while the researcher observed and recorded each turn. They were informed that there would be interruptions by the researcher in order to seek clarifications about any observed phenomenon. Thus, while they were giving feedback and when the researcher observed interesting issues, he stopped the discussion and inquired about the reasons that led the student (i.e., the assessor or assessee) to such action. This was the only role played by the researcher, who was not involved any further, for instance, by providing explanatory comments. For example, in one of the verbal protocol sessions, the researcher noticed that the assessor was not using the evaluation checklist. When the researcher interrupted the discussion and inquired about the reason for this, the assessor explained that he was fully aware of the criteria used in the checklist and so there was no need for him to use it when assessing his classmates. Finally, a number of sessions were recorded, and those of relevance were included in this study.

3.9 Design of the study

This study consisted of a *one-group* approach and involved two phases (see section 3.6.2 for why this approach was adopted in this study), the duration of each being six weeks. In each phase the subjects were required to develop 5 essays with two drafts each. Therefore, in the whole experiment, each participant developed 10 essays, with a total of 20 drafts. In the first phase, the subjects were introduced to the conventional

PF (giving and receiving feedback based on macro and micro levels) and did not receive teacher feedback at all. In the second phase, the subjects were provided with feedback on macro level features and the teacher provided feedback on micro level features.

In both phases, the subjects provided feedback to their colleagues using Alhazmi and Schofield's (2007) evaluation form (see appendix IV). The evaluation form focused on 8 main categories in essay writing. The first five categories (i.e., main idea, purpose, content, text structure and cohesion) are considered macro level features. On the other hand, the remaining 3 categories (i.e., vocabulary, grammar and mechanical accuracy) are deemed micro level features, and these were removed during the second phase as the teacher/researcher was providing this type of FB. Each category has its own sub-features that allowed the subjects to provide feedback for their colleagues based on clear, straightforward questions. This evaluation form corresponds to Paulus's (1999) scoring rubrics, which were used to evaluate the pre-, mid- and post-tests in this study.

The duration of each phase was 3 hours a week for 6 weeks; in addition to the PF training week, one week was allocated after each phase for administering tests, questionnaires and interviews. The entire duration of the study was therefore 15 weeks. This made it possible for the same subjects to be exposed to both the conventional (phase 1) and the new form (phase 2) of PF, and to investigate their experience and judgments of both forms. In addition, it allowed the researcher to make a comparison between the two phases.

3.9.1 Practical procedures

The group involved in the study was introduced to both the conventional and the new forms of peer feedback in two phases. The conventional form was introduced in the first phase, on the understanding that it was unlikely that the subjects would know

anything at all about the notion of PF. In the second phase, the new form of PF was introduced (see section 3.9.6 for a diagrammatic representation of the study). In each phase, the subjects were involved in writing 5 essays, one per week. Therefore, the subjects of this study wrote about 10 topics, two drafts each. The five topics the participants wrote about in phase 1 were different from the five topics in phase 2, and these 10 topics are different from the three topics they wrote about in the writing tests. In other words, no topics from either stage were repeated.

3.9.2 Evaluation Checklist

Various researchers (e.g., Berg, 1999; Paulus, 1999; Min, 2006; Alhazmi & Schofield, 2007; Grami, 2010) have commented on the importance of using an evaluation checklist, and it was thus deemed appropriate to employ one in this research. Min's (2006) PF training strategy, which requires utilising evaluative criteria, was adapted for use in this study. It seemed sensible to adapt an evaluation form from a previous study that had already been tested and revised by experts; therefore, more than 10 evaluation forms were gathered from the literature (see, for example, the above-mentioned studies) and examined by the researcher. After a thorough examination, it was decided that the one used by Alhazmi and Schofield (2007) was the best fit for this study. This is because it was designed and used in a similar context, and it provides a detailed description, when compared to other evaluation forms, of macro and micro writing features. In addition, it allows the students to respond to various questions in an organised and clear manner. Although Alhazmi and Schofield's (2007) evaluation form is designed carefully, for the purposes of this study the researcher split and labelled the questions under macro and micro level features in order to familiarise the learners with the features of each level.

3.9.3 PF training

After taking charge of the Advanced Writing module (coded: Eng 413), explaining the study and its aims, explaining what the PF technique is, and dealing with ethical considerations, the pre-questionnaire was administered; the pre-test was administered in the following session. Then training using PF took place using Min's (2006) modelling technique (see chapter 2, section 2.9.3). The researcher used a sample essay and provided FB following the four stages and using the evaluation checklist. The students observed and asked questions when necessary. After that, a sample essay was given to the students along with the evaluation checklist. They were given time to practise giving PF on the given essay individually, during which their inquiries regarding the whole process were answered directly by the teacher/researcher. After that they started discussing the PF they had produced individually with their fellow students, and, once more, all of their inquiries about the whole process were responded to by the teacher. Finally, it was established that to some extent all the students had acquired a reasonable understanding of how this technique works in practical terms — i.e., they had become able take part in giving and receiving PF.

3.9.4 Phase one

After completing the stage of PF training, the actual data collection started with the first phase. As the taught writing module is a three-hour module and is divided into three sessions (module session distribution was fixed and changes were not possible), it was necessary to divide the time between the teaching and the writing activities. Therefore, the first session was dedicated to developing the first draft of the students' first essays, after which they were paired with students of a similar level of linguistic proficiency. They exchanged their first draft essays and started reading and inquiring about issues related to the ambiguity/clarity of the essays and any problem areas, which is the first step in giving PF. In the following session, the students had already

identified their classmates' writing problems and prepared comments (the second step in giving PF) at home, and started taking turns discussing the PF by explaining the nature of the identified problems and providing suggestions for solving these problems (the remaining two steps of PF). After that they went home with their essays and the received PF and modified the essays accordingly in order to produce the second draft. This and the percentages sheet were submitted in the third session (see section 3.8.6 on documentary evidence). The same procedure took place during the following weeks of the first phase. The week after completing the fifth essay (the 8th week of the whole study), mid-test, mid- questionnaire and mid-interviews were administered. It should be noted here that no teacher FB was given during this phase.

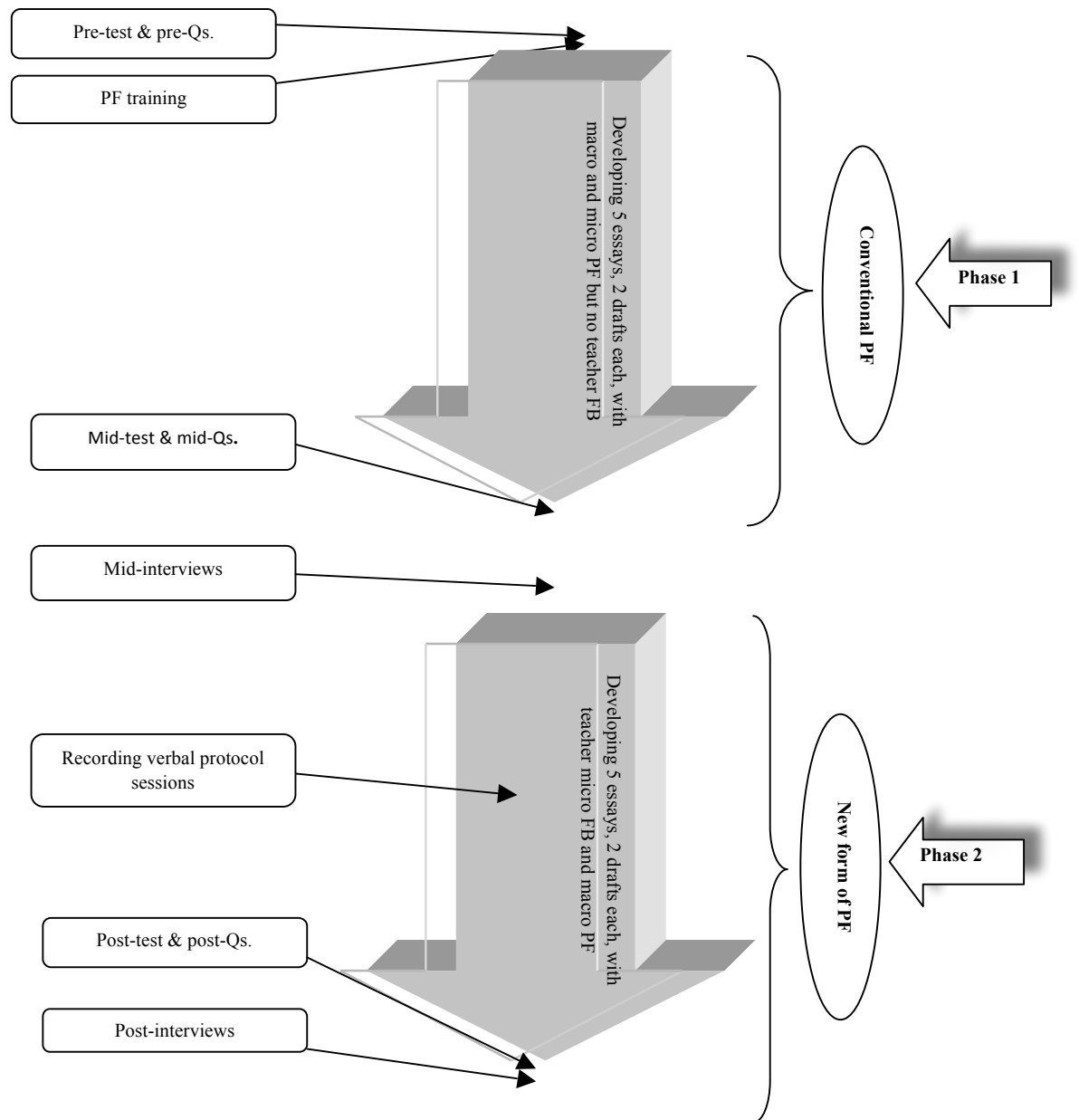
Finally, it will be helpful to provide a global picture of how a typical class proceeded. A typical class proceeded as follows. The first 10 minutes of each session were allocated for teaching, which included explaining the purpose of the class, introducing tips on how to write argumentative essays, and introducing particular academic vocabulary. When the tests were administered, the session followed the same pattern, the only difference being that after writing the essays, they were collected by the teacher/researcher. The participants did not provide PF on them until the drafts were returned on the following session. None of the sessions deviated markedly from this pattern.

3.9.5 Phase two

After completing the first phase and administering the mid-test, mid-questionnaire and mid-interviews, the second phase started. Since the teacher provided micro FB during this phase (as part of the suggested new form of PF), the procedures had to be changed slightly. In the first session, the students developed the first drafts and then these were collected immediately by the teacher/researcher so that he could provide micro FB on

all the essays and hand them back in the following session. In the following session (session 2), the students received the teacher's micro FB and then exchanged their essays with their classmates, when they were required to provide macro PF alone. The four steps involved in giving macro PF were carried out during the second session. They then took their macro PF and teacher micro FB home, developed the second drafts accordingly, and submitted them in the third session of that week. During the following weeks in this phase the same procedures were followed. After completing 5 essays — i.e., completion of the second phase — post-test, post-questionnaire and post-interviews were administered (i.e., in week 15). Field notes were collected during both phases. Verbal protocols were recorded when possible during the second phase of the study.

3.9.6 Representation of the study



3.10 Piloting the study

It is important to pilot a study whenever possible; thus, the instruments used in this study were piloted before they were used to collect the data. In piloting, procedures that are going to be used in the main study are tested on a small scale. These procedures are then revised on the basis of whatever the testing has revealed (Gall et al., 2007). The point of piloting is thus to test and revise instruments and then finalise them for the main study (Mackey & Gass, 2005). Weaknesses in instrument implementation or subtle flaws in the design can be revealed when piloting, even if the instruments have been carefully designed; therefore, it is seen as crucial (Mackey & Gass, 2005). In addition, piloting can save the researcher time during the subsequent data collection. Moreover, the larger the number of participants involved in the piloting stage, especially if the study is concerned with developing a learning tool or measuring an attitude, the better the development of the instrument in terms of achieving a satisfactory measurement level (Gall et al., 2007).

According to Opie (2004), it is particularly important to pilot questionnaires, and Oppenheim states that,

“Questionnaires do not emerge fully-fledged; they have to be created or adapted, fashioned and developed to maturity – it has to be piloted. Piloting can help not only with the wording of questions but also with procedural matters such as the design of the letter of introduction, the ordering of question sequences and the reduction of non-response rates” (Oppenheim, 1992: 47).

Piloting can provide the answers to different sorts of question: for example, regarding the time needed to complete the questionnaire, the clarity of the instructions, whether

there is any ambiguity in any of the questions, whether or not to omit major items, the clarity and attractiveness of the layout, and other unexpected comments (Opie, 2004). Opie (ibid.) also explains that the piloting stage should involve different subjects from those who are due to be included in the study. In this study, attempts were made to pilot not only the questionnaire but also the other instruments, as discussed below.

3.10.1 Questionnaire pre-piloting stage

Dörnyei and Csizer (2012) recommend that after designing the questionnaire, it should be assessed by friends, colleagues or even members of the researcher's family, who can provide detailed feedback. Dörnyei and Csizer (2012) further explain that this stage can allow the development of a near-final version. Taking these points into account, after designing the first draft of the questionnaire for this research, it was handed to 16 PhD students in the School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences at Newcastle University. Those who had a strong background in designing questionnaires were targeted. Some of the drafts were sent via email, while others were given out by hand, all at different times during the pre-piloting stage. Each of these drafts, together with the associated feedback, was then collected. The researcher asked for justifications where necessary, to ensure that the given comments and suggestions were fully understood and reasonable. When modifications had been made based on the comments received, a newer version was produced and handed to different PhD students, and so on. Four modified versions were produced, after which the questionnaire was ready for the piloting stage.

The comments identified grammatical errors, spelling mistakes and item omission. The appearance of the questionnaire was also commented on. The importance of the introductory paragraph and of illustrating key words was pointed out during this stage. Some suggestions were made with regard to making some items shorter and with

simpler structures and simpler wording. The way the scale was used was thought to be somewhat confusing. The scales had originally been located at the top of the page, with numbers assigned to each one and written in the boxes in front of each category (e.g., Attitudes, Motivation... etc.) (see figure 3.2 below). It was suggested that this could be confusing for the subjects (i.e., learners could have misread ‘Strongly Agree’ as ‘Strongly Disagree’, and thus mistakenly selected number 5 instead of number 1) and that it would be best to use scales inside the boxes in front of each category, without using numbers, so the subjects would not have to go back to the top of the page each time they were uncertain about the scale.

Figure 3.2: Questionnaire design during pre-piloting stage (Example of confusion)

Section 2: Peer Feedback					
Please mark the boxes that best describe your feeling to the corresponding statement knowing that: (1= Strongly disagree), (2= Disagree), (3= Neither agree nor disagree), (4= Agree), and (5= Strongly agree).					
Part I) Attitudes	1	2	3	4	5
1- I find writing interesting .					
2- I find practice in writing useful .					
3- I find writing difficult .					
4- Using peer feedback technique in writing is interesting .					
5- Using peer feedback in learning is boring .					
6- Peer feedback is reliable as a source of information.					
7- Reading my classmates' essays is useless .					
8- Reading my classmates' comments is useful and beneficial .					
9- Peer feedback is a useful technique for improving writing skills.					
10- I hope my English teacher will avoid this technique to teach writing next semester.					
11- I do my best to give helpful feedback to my colleagues.					
12- I recommend peer feedback for future classes.					
Part II) Motivation	1	2	3	4	5
13- I have a very strong desire to learn writing.					
14- I doubt that I will push myself to learn writing.					
15- I am prepared to expend a lot of effort in learning composition.					
16- It is worthless for me to learn how to use peer feedback.					
17- I always think over what we learn in peer feedback sessions.					
18- If peer feedback were used outside the class, I would try to participate in it.					
19- During peer feedback activities, I work very carefully and try to make sure I understand everything.					
20- I have a very weak desire to use peer feedback in writing.					
21- Using peer feedback is a meaningless technique in developing my composition skills.					
22- I am willing to work hard at using peer feedback in composition.					
23- If peer feedback sessions were offered in the future, I would like to take them.					

Finally, initially the pre-questionnaire had been designed with the same questions as the mid- and post-questionnaires, but using different tenses of the verb (i.e., future, present

and past). For example, question number 17 (*I always think over what we learn in peer feedback sessions*) was written in the future form: *I **will** always think over what we learn in peer feedback sessions* in the pre-questionnaire, in the present in the mid-questionnaire, and in the past tense in the post-questionnaire. It was pointed out during the pre-piloting stage that this could affect the reliability of the responses, since the students' responses would appear different simply as a result of using different tenses of the verb, regardless of the effects of the intervention. Therefore, in the final versions the wording in all three stages of the questionnaire was *identical*.

3.10.2 Questionnaire piloting stage

After the pre-piloting stage was over, the piloting of the questionnaire took place during the summer course, before the new academic year began. Unfortunately, no writing module was running during the summer course. However, students of the same level as the sample to be used in the main study were available ($N = 15$). The students as well as the module leader indicated their willingness to participate in the piloting. At the end of one of their sessions, the study and its purpose were explained to familiarise them with the context of the study, and then questionnaires were administered, at which time the students highlighted one problematic question. It was then realised that the verb used in that particular statement (item number 14) had been mis-translated, and did not fit the context. Additionally, a small number of spelling mistakes were spotted. The students were asked about their views regarding the design and the length of the questionnaire, as well as any other concerns they had. Remarkably, all of them found it satisfactory and did not have any additional comments to make. I believe that the pre-piloting stage played an important role in minimising the faults in the questionnaire.

Additionally, it had been observed that students needed 10-15 minutes to complete the questionnaire. This was taken into account when administering the questionnaires

during the actual data collection. Finally, the piloting data were coded into SPSS and the internal consistency was measured to investigate whether there was a need for any modifications. The results suggested that there was no need to omit any items and that the questionnaire was internally consistent (see section 3.11.1). At this stage it was determined that the questionnaire was ready to use for collecting data.

3.10.3 Piloting other instruments

Interview questions were administered to three volunteers. The duration of the interviews ranged from 10 to 13 minutes. It was found that two of the interview questions produced similar answers. That is, when the three volunteers were asked about: a) their preference for focusing on macro level, and b) their preference for focusing on macro and micro levels jointly, their answers were duplicated. Therefore, the two questions were merged into a single question (question 7, see appendix I), and then this particular question was tried out separately and was found to be effective. The interviewees did not have any additional comments to make in relation to the interview questions. Moreover, this stage allowed the researcher to examine the audio recorder and learn how to use it properly: for example, how to use the pause function and where to place the recorder to ensure good sound quality.

The test was also given to the students. This required them to write an essay of around 200-250 words in length. It was felt that it was important to measure the duration of the test, since this would help in deciding how to divide each lesson during the subsequent data collection sessions. It was observed that the students needed 35-40 minutes to produce their first drafts. Additionally, they needed approximately 10 minutes to read each other's essays and inquire about the writers' intentions (the first two steps of PF).

The evaluation checklist was the last instrument which needed piloting. Copies were given to the students, and they were asked to go through it and highlight any problematic or unclear aspects that they observed. One area of possible confusion which came to light was the fact that the evaluation checklist required them to write in the evaluator's name as well as the writer's name. The wording used was confusing in the sense that they were uncertain as to where to place the writer's name and where the evaluator's name. This problem was remedied, and then the checklist was shown again to some of the students and found to be appropriate. No additional comments were given in relation to layout, ambiguity of questions, language...etc. It is believed that no modifications were required because the checklist had been adapted from one used in a previous study which had been conducted in a similar context (Alahzmi & Schofield, 2007).

Finally, since the summer term is short, it was not possible to apply a short version of the study, which may have given an overview of how all the tools functioned together, which would in turn have allowed further adjustments to be made if any had been needed.

3.11 Validity and reliability of the study

In every study it is important for the researcher to take measures to ensure the validity and reliability of the study, as this gives authenticity to the findings. According to Bryman (2012), reliability and validity are the most salient evaluative criteria of social research. Although they may appear separate from one another, they are, in fact, closely related, in that having unreliable measures presumes the invalidity of those measures.

3.11.1 Reliability

The concept of reliability is concerned mainly with the question of whether the measures used in a piece of research are consistent, i.e., repeatable. This concept is likely to concern researchers who are employing quantitative measures in particular (Bryman, 2012). According to Bryman (ibid.), there are three types of reliability which show whether or not the measurements used are reliable — these are: *stability* (measurement stability over time, which means that similar results will be obtained if a measurement is re-administered), *internal reliability* (the consistency of the indicators of a scale, i.e., whether respondents' responses to one indicator (of a particular scale) tend to be related to their scores for other indicators), and *inter-observer consistency* (consistency between marks given when two or more assessors are used with a particular instrument).

Instrument consistency is the simplest way to define reliability (Mackey & Gass, 2005). Equivalence, for example, between pre- and post-tests is considered important. For instance, the difficulty of both tests needs to be maintained at the same level, otherwise the results of the study, after implementation of the treatment, are likely to be falsely high or falsely low (Mackey & Gass, 2005). This was taken into consideration when administering the tests for this study, in order to ensure the reliable measurement of students' performance.

Moreover, an assessment of the reliability of an instrument that uses a quantitative analytical approach is performed by measuring its *internal consistency* (Cohen et al., 2011). In the case of this research, the questionnaire data from the piloting stage were coded into SPSS and then the internal consistency was measured using Cronbach's Alpha. According to Bryman (2012: 170), this test, which “essentially calculates the average of all possible split-half reliability coefficients”, is widely used for testing internal reliability. The SPSS output yielded an alpha coefficient of 0.954 (see table 3.4

below) which, according to Cohen et al. (2011: 604), suggested that the questionnaire was *very highly reliable*.

Table 3.4: Questionnaire internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha)

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.954	.951	40

Inter-rater reliability

Inter-rater reliability considers the question of whether a second observer interprets the data in the same way as the first (Cohen et al., 2011). Because rating involves subjectivity (i.e., in decision making) about how to categorise a particular set of data, it is recommended that more than one rater be used, to give the researcher more confidence in the conclusions reached (Mackey & Gass, 2005). To increase the reliability of the raters, it is also recommended that the researcher excludes him/herself from the rating process, carefully selects raters, trains them in how to use the adopted scale, and explains the goals of the study (Mackey & Gass, 2005).

Rating the pre-, mid- and post-tests

The pre-, mid- and post-tests were equivalent and maintained the same level of difficulty, as suggested by Mackey and Gass (2005); the topics used for these tests were stated earlier in this chapter (see section 3.8.3). It was also important to make sure that the pre-, mid- and post-tests were evaluated in a valid and reliable way (ibid.). Thus, two raters with experience in rating essays in an ESL academic setting were carefully

selected. The aims of the study were explained to them, after which a sample essay was provided so that they could practise and check whether there were any disagreements in their decision making about marking the essay. This was done in order to establish common grounds in the marking and in an attempt to ensure as far as possible the reliability of the marking, i.e., to ensure that there were no deviations in the scoring. The two raters used Paulus's (1999) scoring rubrics. These rubrics were carefully designed by Paulus and have gained the confidence of various researchers (see section 3.8.3). The fact that these rubrics give a detailed explanation of writing features, using a scale from 1 to 10 for each classification, ensured that the raters shared common ground when rating the subjects' essays. This, together with the fact that the same raters were used in all three stages of the testing, increased the inter-rater reliability, as suggested by Mackey and Gass (2005). According to Larson-Hall (2010), inter-rater reliability can be measured using the Intraclass Correlation Coefficient, which is used to examine the level of agreement between two raters rating the same data. The test was run and yielded an alpha coefficient of .849 (see tables 3.5, 3.6), which suggests that the level of agreement between the raters was fairly high (Larson-Hall, 2010). Finally, the two marks given by each rater to each participant were averaged and the result was used for the analysis.

Table 3.5: Inter-rater reliability

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.849	2

Table 3.6: Intraclass Correlation Coefficient

	Intraclass Correlation	95% Confidence Interval		F Test with True Value 0			
		Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Value	df1	df2	Sig
Single Measures	.738	.570	.847	6.634	44	44	.000
Average Measures	.849	.726	.917	6.634	44	44	.000

3.11.2 Validity

Validity is mainly concerned with the integrity of the outcomes of a piece of research (Bryman, 2012). For a researcher, it is important to come up with valid results, especially after he or she has taken a great deal of time to design the study. Cohen et al. (2011) explain that validity is a crucial component of effective research, and that without it, a piece of research is worthless. It is seen as “...the touchstone of all types of educational research” (Cohen et al., 2011: 180). Mackey and Gass (2005) point out that the results of a study need to be meaningful in terms of reflecting what the researcher believes they reflect. A common definition of validity given by Mertens (1998: 292) is “...the extent to which [the instrument] measures what it was intended to measure”. Researchers have introduced different types of validity: *content validity*, *construct validity* and *face validity*, each of which is discussed in relation to this study below. Triangulation is also discussed in this section as a means of demonstrating the validity and reliability of the data.

Content validity

Mackey and Gass (2005: 107) say that, “...content validity refers to the representativeness of our measurement regarding the phenomenon about which we want information”. In other words, content validity should be fair and comprehensive with regard to the aspects it is covering (Cohen et al., 2011). In more detail, Mertens says that:

“...content validity is especially important in studies that purport to compare two (or more) different curricula, teaching strategies, or school placements. If all students are taking the same test but all the students were not exposed to the same information, the test is not equally content valid for all the groups” (1998: 294).

All the subjects in this study were treated with equivalence (e.g., they received the same teaching, the same training, and the same amount of FB from the teacher and their peers). The teaching, for example, focused on argumentative essays that required knowledge of both macro and micro level features, which corresponded to the features highlighted in the PF evaluation form. In addition, the same PF evaluation form, in which the criteria used for grading the student's essays were embedded, was used throughout the study, which meant that the students used the same criteria (content) for measuring their fellow students.

Construct validity

Construct validity is also referred to as *measurement validity*, and applies mainly to quantitative research (Bryman, 2012). It is concerned with the question of whether the measurement tool is truly measuring and reflecting the concept it was designed to measure (Mackey & Gass, 2005; Bryman, 2012). In this study, the writing tests were designed in order to obtain written essays of a particular length (i.e., 200 - 250 words), of a particular genre (argumentative), and written in a particular amount of time (i.e., less than one hour), and all these characteristics were applied to the other essays — that is, the 10 essays that were written during the two phases. Therefore, it can be said that the subjects were tested within the limit of their knowledge, i.e., within what they were taught during the study.

Moreover, the instruments used in this study were carefully selected and designed to provide adequate answers to the research questions. The questionnaire, on the other hand, was designed and then pre-piloted several times, after which it was piloted in the context where the data were collected. These stages provided sufficient data to investigate the construct validity of the instrument. In addition, most of the items used, classified under different categories, were adapted from other studies, i.e., they had

already been examined in real contexts. For example, a few items under the category of attitudes were adapted from other studies in the same field (PF in writing, see table 3.2), and then tested several times in the pre-piloting and piloting stages. In addition, the questionnaire was translated into the respondents' mother tongue (Arabic), used multi-item scales, and used negative adjectives (instead of using, for example, *not*, *don't*), as well as having the main adjectives of each item typed in **bold** font; all of these measures are considered to increase validity (Dörnyei, 2010; Dörnyei & Csizer, 2012). Therefore, it can be said that the questionnaire measured the main themes it was designed for, thus it had a high level of construct validity.

Face validity

Face validity can be established when “the measure apparently reflects the content of the concept in question”, which is required when developing new measures (Bryman, 2012: 171). Put simply, it can be established by asking other people, especially those who have expertise in a particular field, to check whether or not the measure appears to represent the concept it is designed to measure (Bryman, 2012). Face validity is seen to be closely related to content validity in that the aim is to convince others that the designed measurement has content validity (Mackey & Gass, 2005).

With regard to this study, the writing tests, questionnaires and interview questions were shown to an academic staff member, as well as to a number of PhD students in the school of ECLS at Newcastle University who had experience in the field of collaborative writing. After reading the research questions and checking these instruments, they agreed that these instruments appeared to be valid in relation to the themes embedded in the research questions (e.g., attitudes, motivation).

3.11.3 Trustworthiness

It was also necessary to consider the concept of trustworthiness in relation to the reliability and validity of the qualitative data obtained for this study. According to Bryman (2012) and Mackey and Gass (2005), this concept involves criteria such as *credibility* (parallel to internal validity), *transferability* (parallel to external validity) and *confirmability* (parallel to reliability). First, data obtained in a study can be deemed to be credible if they have been collected over a period of sufficient length to enable the researcher to capture a complete picture of the subject under investigation. In this study, data were collected over an entire academic term, which was assumed to be sufficient for the researcher to draw a complete picture of what effects the PF technique (in both its forms) had on the participants. Second, transferability refers to whether or not a piece of research provides a ‘thick description’ of the data, in which different representative examples are given with interpretations of their meanings; in this study, these are provided in the Results and Discussion chapters. Finally, the principle criterion for judging confirmability is that all the data on which arguments are based should be included, and this is the case in this study, all relevant data being presented in the following chapter. According to Mackey and Gass (2005), in second language research these three criteria of trustworthiness can be aided by using the technique of triangulation, a concept used in this study and discussed in section 3.11.4 below.

In order to ensure the reliability of the data obtained from the interviews in this study, the interviews were recorded using an audio recorder, which made it possible to obtain an accurate record of what the students said (Berg, 2007); it also meant that the researcher was able to refer back whenever there was a need to re-check the data after coding. Additionally, interview transcriptions are included in the appendices in order to allow the reader to skim through them if any confirmation of the findings is required.

Verbal protocols were also recorded using an audio recorder, which allowed the researcher to derive accurate insights from the students' interactive sessions.

Researcher Bias

Researcher bias is seen as a threat to the validity of qualitative research because the researcher might influence the conduct of a study by allowing his/her beliefs, theories or conceptions to interfere (Maxwell, 2012). For example, the researcher may select the data that fit his/her theoretical framework and avoid including other data (Maxwell, 2012).

In this study, an attempt was made to investigate if there was any bias caused by the researcher. First of all, the researcher ensured that all sorts of data gathered were included and used in the study (i.e., included in the results chapter and in the appendices). Moreover, an examination of the researcher's verbal behaviour through reading the transcripts of the interviews produced no clear evidence that the researcher was, for example, leading the participants towards specific answers (see appendix IX). Secondly, since the interview questions were piloted and agreed on as being appropriate (see appendix I), this indicates that no bias was found in their construction. With regard to the verbal protocol sessions, the researcher's role was only to inquire about particular phenomena observed when recording (see section 3.8.7), and no role that could affect the results, such as a commentary role, was played by the researcher. In brief, no evidence was found that could be classified as "researcher bias" among the data obtained in this study.

3.11.4 Triangulation

Methodological triangulation has for a long time been considered as a useful or effective method of ensuring validity in the field of second language learning. In

research, triangulation refers to the use of two or more methods when collecting data (Cohen et al., 2011). According to Mackey and Gass (2005: 181), "...it entails the use of multiple, independent methods of obtaining data in a single investigation in order to arrive at the same research finding", since the conclusions of a study cannot be adequately supported using only one method for data collection (p: 181). A researcher can thus be more confident about his/her findings when more methods are used in his/her research (Mackey & Gass, 2005; Cohen et al., 2011). The use of triangulation can reduce the possibility of bias and increase the validity and reliability of the information (Johnson, 1992); Cohen et al. (2011) suggest that it is a powerful way of ensuring concurrent validity.

This study used triangulation in the process of data collection. The data were gathered from multi-stage interviews, multi-stage questionnaires, multi-stage testing, peer comments and multiple drafts written by the subjects. Additionally, the researcher's field notes were used to support the findings of the study. All these techniques should enhance the validity and reliability of the findings, as explained above.

3.12 Ethical considerations

In recent years an increasing amount of attention has been paid to the possible negative effects of research on those being studied (Neuman, 2007). The subjects and events of a study can be easily recognised within local institutions and contexts; thus, more care should be taken with regard to ethical issues (Koshy, 2005). Cohen et al. (2011) say that in social research "...the costs to participants may include affronts to dignity, embarrassment, loss of trust in social relations, loss of autonomy and self-determination and lowered self-esteem" (p: 75).

In action research, ethical issues fall into three broad categories: negotiating access, protecting the participants and assuring good faith (McNiff & Whitehead, 2005). When conducting a study at an organisational level, and when the research relates to the learning of others, permission has to be obtained both from the leader of the organisation concerned and from the subjects (O'Hanlon, 2003; Gall et al., 2007; Hopkins, 2008; Cohen et al., 2011). Obtaining written permission from both the organisation and the participants involved in the study is important (McNiff & Whitehead, 2005). The second ethical issue involves putting the welfare of participants before that of the researcher at all times: in other words, promising the participants confidentiality and anonymity when asked for, and not mentioning the institution's name unless permitted (O'Hanlon, 2003; McNiff & Whitehead, 2005; Gall et al., 2007; Hopkins, 2008). In addition, any participant has the right to withdraw from the study at any time and his/her data must be destroyed. Furthermore, it is important to assure good faith by letting people know that you are trustworthy; thus, the researcher must keep promises, show courtesy and respect to others, and never ask others to do things the researcher is not willing to do him/herself. Good responses are obtained whenever trust has been established (O'Hanlon, 2003; McNiff & Whitehead, 2005).

Thus, in this study ethical issues were carefully considered. Permission for conducting the study was obtained from the administration of the institution in which the data were collected. Moreover, participants were required to sign a Consent Form (see appendix V), and were informed that they could choose not to participate in the study. One student preferred not to become part of this study. Consequently he was excluded, and was not affected negatively in any way. The students were informed that the researcher would keep their identities anonymous at all times, that they had the right to withdraw at any time and that the data they provided would be destroyed. The other issues discussed earlier were also taken into consideration.

4. Results

In the previous chapter the instruments and processes of data collection were described. In this chapter, the analyses of both the qualitative and the quantitative data gathered from the participants ($N = 41$) are presented. These data were obtained from the three stages of writing tests, the three stages of the questionnaire, the two stages of interviews with volunteer students ($N = 11$), the six sessions of verbal protocol recordings, and from field notes and documentary evidence. The chapter is divided into sections, with each section devoted to a presentation of the data gathered from the relevant research instrument. The sections are also divided into sub-sections, most of which correspond with the major themes inspired by the research questions. Furthermore, brief conclusions are given where necessary, with the aim of helping the reader to make links between this chapter and the discussion chapter, which follows.

SPSS software was used to examine the quantitative data obtained from the pre-, mid- and post-tests and the pre-, mid- and post-questionnaires. It should be noted here that negative questions in the questionnaire were reversed, i.e., recoded as positive questions. This was done to allow the measurement of the students' responses to all questions in the same direction (i.e., measurement in a positive direction). Data analysis using SPSS can be quite easy; however, the selection of the appropriate test depends entirely on the decision of the researcher (Norusis, 2006). Therefore, in order to analyse the data obtained for this study, it was decided to calculate the statistics in the form of means (M) and standard deviations (SD) and to use parametric and non-parametric tests. However, it is recommended that before selecting parametric or non-parametric tests, researchers run a test of normality, as parametric tests assume the normality of the

distribution of the data, whereas non-parametric tests do not (Larson-Hall, 2010; Kinnear & Gray, 2012).

Before embarking on the analysis of the data obtained from the writing tests, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, which is a standard test of normality, was run. The results suggested that the data were normally distributed (see table 4.1a). It was therefore appropriate to use the parametric Paired Sample T-Test for this part of the analysis because two mean scores were obtained from the same subjects (Norusis, 2006; Larson-Hall, 2010; Kinnear & Gray, 2012).

Table 4.1a: Tests of Normality (Writing tests).

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pre-test	.123	41	.120
Mid-test	.118	41	.158
Post-test	.117	41	.177

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was also run on the data obtained from the pre-, mid- and post-questionnaires; this time the results of the test indicated that the data were not normally distributed. Thus, in order to measure whether the difference between the means obtained after each treatment was statistically significant, the parametric T-Test was not appropriate (Larson-Hall, 2010; Kinnear & Gray, 2012). It was thus decided that the alternative, non-parametric test should be used. According to Larsen-Hall (2011) and Kinnear and Gray (2012), the non-parametric test equivalent to the Paired Sample T-Test is the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test, and this test was used in this study to compare the means obtained from the different stages of the questionnaire.

Another important point that should be mentioned here is that when analysing the questionnaire items, especially in areas related to attitudes and motivation, the questions were combined as single variables (i.e., the mean of the combined questions was calculated) for the purposes of analysis. This is because combining the results obtained for all questions categorised under one theme (in this case, e.g., the ‘attitudes towards writing’ or the ‘motivation to learn writing’ questions) can give a ‘global’ picture of the subjects’ responses concerning the investigated theme. In addition, in this study the interest did not lie in answers to individual questions. Nevertheless, it was decided that the raw data obtained from the three stages of the questionnaire which underlie the inferences made in this chapter should be included in the appendices (see appendix VII, table 4.25).

Before presenting the data, it is appropriate here to make reference to the method used for analysing the qualitative data. The qualitative data — namely, those obtained from the open-ended section of the questionnaires, from the interviews, the verbal protocol recordings, and the field notes and documentary evidence — were mainly analysed using the qualitative NVivo program, which allowed the data to be sorted according to different themes, facilitating the tracing of changes in, for example, attitudes and motivation.

In the preceding section justifications for selecting the tests used to analyse the quantitative data obtained for this study and for selecting the methods used to analyse both the qualitative and the quantitative data were provided. In the following sections the findings of the study are presented in detail, starting with the writing tests analysis, including overall scores, and evidence of different ratings according to Paulus’s scoring rubric (4.1). The questionnaire results relating to the students’ perceptions of writing and PF are then presented (4.2), and this is followed by the qualitative analysis of the student interviews (4.3). Information obtained from documentary evidence of student

PF using their own evaluation and percentages sheets is presented in section 4.4, and the chapter concludes with the presentation of the additional data obtained from the verbal protocols (4.5) and from the field notes of classroom observations (4.6).

4.1 Writing Tests results

4.1.1 Overall scores

The analysis of the writing tests results (i.e., pre-, mid- and post-tests) revealed that no student scored below 4 in the post-test, while in the mid-test no student scored below 2.7. In the pre-test the minimum score was 1.6. Generally speaking, in the three tests a large proportion of students scored as follows: pre-test; between 2.4 and 3.6; mid-test: between 3.7 and 5.2, and post-test: between 5.2 and 6.6 (see figure 4.1 and table 4.1 for the descriptive statistics).

Figure 4.1: Students' scores in the pre-, mid- and post-tests.

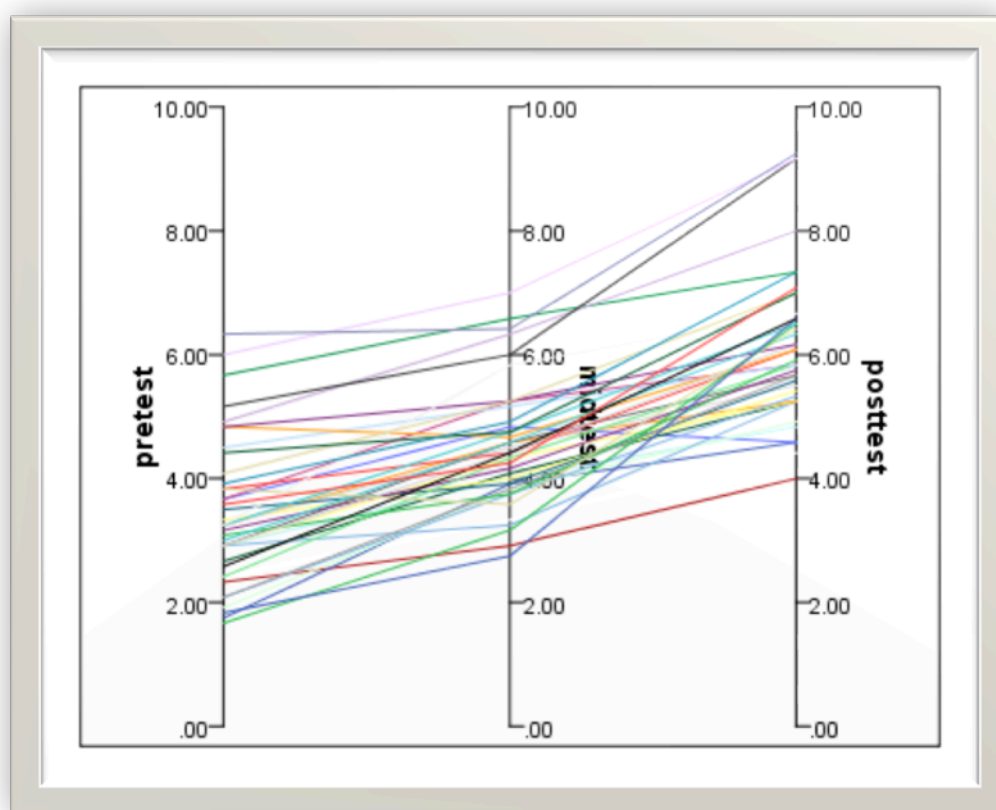


Table 4.1: Paired Samples Statistics (Linguistic performance).

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pre-test	3.4309	41	1.15363	.18017
	Mid-test	4.5285	41	.98665	.15409
Pair 2	Mid-test	4.5285	41	.98665	.15409
	Post-test	6.1484	41	1.21771	.19017
Pair 3	DIFF1	-1.0976	41	.62581	.09773
	DIFF2	-1.6199	41	.85087	.13288

In order to analyse the changes in the students' writing scores after exposure to each treatment, the Paired Sample T-Test was used to determine whether or not there were differences in the students' performances in the pre-, mid- and post-tests. Using SPSS, the test was run first on the pre- and mid-test results and then on the mid- and post-test results, to establish whether or not there were statistically significant improvements after each of the two interventions (see appendix VII, table 4.2). A statistically significant difference was found ($t = -11.23$, $p < 0.001$) between the pre- and mid-test results, with a mean score of $M = 3.43$ and a standard deviation of $SD = 1.15$ obtained for the pre-test, and a mean score of $M = 4.52$ and a standard deviation of $SD = 0.98$ obtained for the mid-test. A statistically significant difference was found ($t = -12.19$, $p < 0.001$) between the mid- and post-test results, with a mean score of $M = 6.14$ and a standard deviation of $SD = 1.21$ being obtained for the post-test.

The differences found between the means obtained for the pre- and mid-test results and the differences found between the mid- and post-test results were both equally statistically significant, at $p < 0.001$. For this reason, it was considered to be worth undertaking a further comparison between the differences in the pre- and mid-test and the differences in the mid- and post-test results to show if the statistical significance of the change after exposure to the second treatment was greater than that of the change

after exposure to the first treatment. This was calculated by subtracting the results each student obtained in the pre-test from his results in the mid-test, and then subtracting the results each student obtained in the mid-test from his results in the post-test (i.e., pre-test – mid-test = *diff1*; mid-test – post-test = *diff2*). After that, these differences (*diff1* & *diff2*) for all the students could be compared using the Paired Sample T-Test.

Therefore, a further comparison was made between the differences in the means obtained for the pre- and mid-tests (coded as *diff1*), and the differences in the means obtained for the mid- and post-tests (coded as *diff2*). The results revealed a statistically significant difference ($t = 2.78, p = 0.008$) between the first and the second differences, with a mean for the first difference (*diff1*) of $M = -1.09$, and a mean for the second difference (*diff2*) of $M = -1.61$ (see table 4.1 and appendix VII, table 4.2).

To conclude, the results show that the students' writing scores had improved at a statistically significant level ($p = 0.001$) after exposure to each of the two treatments (the conventional form of PF and the new form of PF). In addition, the improvement at the end of the second treatment was statistically significantly greater than that at the end of the first treatment.

Several patterns were observed in the scores of all the students in all the tests. It was observed that students who started at high and mid-levels ($N = 8$) in the pre-test were likely to show greater progress in the post-test (i.e., after exposure to the new form of PF) than in the mid-test (i.e., after exposure to the conventional PF). A few students who started at mid- and high-levels made more or similar progress in the mid-test compared with the post-test. Additionally, it was found that those who started at low levels ($N = 14$) were likely to make less progress in the post-test than in the mid-test. Finally, a few students who got low scores ($N = 17$) in the pre-test showed more evidence of progress between the mid- and the post-test than between the pre- and the

mid-test. Therefore, it can be said that there were no clear trends among those who started at low levels.

4.1.2 Effects on writing features (macro and micro)

As this study used Paulus's (1999) scoring rubrics, which categorise writing features into six categories (i.e., organisation/unity, development, cohesion/coherence, structure, vocabulary and mechanics), the grades for each of these categories (on a score from 1 to 10) were used to provide a more detailed picture of the results. In other words, when the essays were marked, each essay was given both sub-scores for each of the aforementioned categories and an overall score (see appendix VII, table 4.26 for the raw data). The sub-scores for each of these six categories were entered into the SPSS program and a Paired Sample T-Test was carried out. The results revealed a statistically significant difference in each of the six categories in the mid- and post-tests at the $p < 0.001$ level (see appendix VII, tables 4.3, 4.4). In other words, the scores for each sub-test were significantly higher in the mid-test than in the pre-test, and significantly higher in the post-test than in the mid-test.

For the purposes of this research, the first three categories (organisation/unity, development and cohesion/coherence) were identified as *macro* level features, and the remaining three categories (structure, vocabulary and mechanics) as *micro* level features (see chapter 2). In order to carry out a more detailed analysis of the contribution of these categories to the development of the students' writing, therefore, comparisons were made between macro and micro level features and of how they changed in the three tests (i.e., pre-, mid- and post-tests).

The Paired Sample T-Test was used to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the macro and micro level features of the students' performances in the pre-, mid- and post-tests. Using SPSS, the test was run on the pre-

micro features ($M = 3.45$, $SD = 1.22$) and the pre-macro features ($M = 3.40$, $SD = 1.16$); the mid-micro features ($M = 4.43$, $SD = 0.98$) and the mid-macro features ($M = 4.62$, $SD = 1.03$), and then the post-micro features ($M = 5.87$, $SD = 1.30$) and the post-macro features ($M = 6.41$, $SD = 1.18$) for all the students in the study, to establish whether there were statistically significant improvements before and after each of the two interventions (see appendix VII, tables 4.5, 4.6). No statistically significant difference was found ($t = 0.618$, $p > 0.05$) between the pre-micro and pre-macro levels. However, a positive statistically significant difference was found ($t = - 2.85$, $p = 0.007$) between the mid-micro and mid-macro levels. Additionally, there was also a positive statistically significant difference ($t = - 7.04$, $p < 0.001$) between the post-micro and post-macro levels.

An additional analysis was carried out in order to probe deeply into the participants' results by investigating the development (difference in the change) of each sub-category after each treatment. The investigation measured whether the difference between the means of each sub-score of the pre- and mid-tests (coded as *diff1*), and that of the mid- and post-tests (coded as *diff2*), was statistically significant. The results revealed a statistically significant difference at the $p < 0.05$ level between the first and the second differences in development, cohesion and structure, but not in organisation, vocabulary and mechanics (see appendix VII, tables 4.3, 4.4). Therefore, this analysis suggests that the majority, but not all, of the macro features were affected positively at a statistically significant level.

In conclusion, the results show that all six categories (as described by Paulus, 1999) of the students' writing improved to a statistically significant degree after exposure to each of the two treatments. Furthermore, a greater improvement was found in most of the macro level features than in the micro level features after exposure to each of the two treatments. In more detail, the improvement in the development, cohesion and structure

categories at the end of the second treatment was greater, at a statistically significant level, than that at the end of the first treatment. In other words, the results indicated greater improvement in the majority of the macro level features at the end of the second treatment than at the end of the first treatment.

4.2 Questionnaire results

The questionnaire used in this study includes two sections. The first section was designed to gather data on the participants' background relating to the way in which they had been taught and their previous experience of PF technique. This section appeared only in the pre-questionnaire. The second section appeared in all three stages of the questionnaire, and was designed to measure the participants' responses regarding various themes related to the research questions (attitudes, motivation...etc.). A Likert scale ranging from 1 – 5 was used, where 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Not sure, 4 = Agree and 5 = Strongly agree. This scale applied to all parts of the questionnaire except Part V, in which a scale from 1 – 4 was used, where 1 = None, 2 = Little, 3 = Some and 4 = A lot. A different scale was used in this part because quantity, rather than views, was being measured; these four levels were deemed adequate to obtain data appropriate for the purposes of this study since they have been used in other, similar studies (e.g., Grami, 2010). Each section of the questionnaire was analysed separately in order to obtain clear descriptions of the gathered data.

Section 1:

This study introduced PF technique in two forms in a writing course to learners in higher education in Saudi Arabia. Since it was unlikely that the sample would be familiar with the concept of PF, it was thought reasonable to dedicate the first section of the questionnaire to investigating the students' background in relation to learning English and the use of PF, since this would make it possible to see if there was any link between the results and their educational background. The following questions were asked:

- 1- Do you feel your English classes are taught in a way that encourages your interest?*
- 2- Would you like to see more student involvement in writing classes?*
- 3- Do you know what peer feedback is?*
- 4- Have you used peer feedback before?*

- If yes, did you find peer feedback interesting?
- 5- How interested are you to receive comments on your essays from your colleagues?*

Table 47a: Learner's background and views.

	N	N of "YES" Responses	N of "NO" Responses	Mean	Std. Deviation
- Do you feel your English classes are taught in a way that encourages your interest?	41	11	30	1.7317	.44857
- Would you like to see more student involvement in writing classes?	41	40	1	1.0244	.15617
- Do you know what peer feedback is?	41	20	21	1.5122	.50606

- Have you used peer feedback before?	41	14	27	1.4390	.50243
- If yes, did you find peer feedback interesting?	14	12	2	.9512	.66900
- How interested are you to receive comments on your essays from your colleagues?	41	N/A	N/A	4.0976	1.13589

The results showed (see table 4.7a above) that the majority of the sample felt their English classes are taught in a way that does not encourage their interest. The whole sample reported their interest in seeing more student involvement in writing classes, with the exception of one respondent. Moreover, half of the sample did not know what PF was ($N = 21$). Fourteen of those who knew what PF was had used it; among whom 12 had found it interesting. Finally, the respondents reported having interest in receiving comments on their essays from their fellow students, with a mean of 4.09 on a scale of 1-5.

Generally speaking, the students in this study did not feel that they were being taught in a way that stimulated their interest in learning English. They claimed to be interested in becoming more involved in writing courses, which might suggest a failure in previous courses to provide opportunities for this kind of engagement. The majority did not appear to have had any experience of PF, but expressed an interest in it.

Section 2:

As explained earlier, this section of the questionnaire was administered at the start of the course — before introducing PF treatments; in the middle — at the end of the first PF intervention, and again at the end of the course — after the second intervention — in order to allow the tracing of changes before and after exposure to each treatment.

4.2.1 Attitudes towards & motivation in writing

4.2.1.1 Attitudes

Questionnaire items related to attitudes towards writing were combined as a single variable and then measured accordingly. As explained earlier, this is because combining the results for all the questions categorised as ‘attitude’ questions could provide a ‘global’ picture of the students’ attitudes towards writing. This is of relevance because, as mentioned earlier, the interest of this study did not lie in answers to individual questions. These questions are as follows:

- 1- I find writing interesting.*
- 2- I find practice in writing useful.*
- 3- I find writing difficult. (reverse coded)*

Table 4.7: Attitudes towards and motivation to learn writing.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
PRE_Attitudes_towards_writing	41	3.8699	.53685	2.33	4.67
MID_Attitudes_towards_writing	41	4.0081	.49715	3.00	5.00
POST_Attitudes_towards_writing	41	4.0976	.54387	3.00	5.00
PRE_Motivation_to_write	41	3.7783	.48958	2.55	4.64
MID_Motivation_to_write	41	3.9002	.53698	2.73	4.91
POST_Motivation_to_write	41	3.9424	.52095	2.27	4.82

The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was used to determine whether or not there was a statistically significant difference in the students' attitudes in the pre-, mid- and post-questionnaires (see table 4.7 above, and appendix VII, table 4.8). Using SPSS, the test was run on the pre-questionnaire results ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 0.53$; with positive high values being obtained for 2 out of 3 items) and the mid-questionnaire results ($M = 4.0$, $SD = 0.49$; with highly positive values being obtained for 2 out of 3 items), and then on the mid-questionnaire and post-questionnaire results ($M = 4.09$, $SD = 0.54$; with highly positive values being obtained for 2 out of 3 items) for all the students in the study, in order to establish whether there were statistically significant changes in their attitudes towards writing after each of the two interventions. No statistically significant difference was found ($Z = -1.83$, $p > 0.05$) between the pre- and mid-questionnaire results. Moreover, no statistically significant difference was found ($Z = -1.14$, $p > 0.05$) between the mid- and post-questionnaire results. However, a statistically significant difference was found between the pre- and post-questionnaire results ($Z = -2.33$, $p = 0.02$).

4.2.1.2 Motivation

Questionnaire items related to motivation to learn writing were combined as a single variable and then measured accordingly (shown above in table 4.7). These questions were:

- 1- I have a very strong desire to learn writing.*
- 2- I doubt that I will push myself to learn writing. (reverse coded)*
- 3- I am prepared to expend a lot of effort in learning composition.*

The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was used to determine whether or not there was a statistically significant difference in the students' motivation to learn writing in the pre-, mid- and post-questionnaires (see table 4.7 above, and appendix VII, table 4.8). Using SPSS, the test was run on the pre-questionnaire results ($M = 3.77$, $SD = 0.48$; with highly positive values being obtained for 2 out of 3 items) and mid-questionnaire results ($M = 3.90$, $SD = 0.53$; with highly positive values being obtained for 2 out of 3 items), and then on the mid-questionnaire results and post-questionnaire results ($M = 3.94$, $SD = 0.52$; with highly positive values being obtained for 2 out of 3 items) for all the students in the study, in order to establish whether there were statistically significant changes in the students' motivation to learn writing after each of the two interventions. A statistically significant difference was found ($Z = -2.26$, $p = 0.02$) between the pre- and mid-questionnaire results. However, no statistically significant difference was found ($Z = -0.30$, $p > 0.05$) between the mid- and post-questionnaires. Additionally, a statistically significant difference was found between the pre- and post-questionnaire results ($Z = -2.27$, $p = 0.02$).

In brief, the students started off with positive attitudes towards and a relatively high level of motivation to learn writing (see table 4.7 above), in that the values obtained were all positive and above the mid-point on the scale used, even taking into account the standard deviation, which shows that although the responses are clustered relatively tightly around the mean, they remain above the mid-point and positive. The statistical test suggests that there was a statistically non-significant change in attitudes after exposure to each of the treatments. Additionally, there was a statistically significant change in the level of motivation after exposure to the conventional PF, but not after exposure to the new form. The statistical test also suggests that there was a statistically significant change in attitudes and motivation after exposure to both treatments.

4.2.2 Attitudes and motivation with regard to PF

4.2.2.1 Attitudes

Questionnaire items related to attitude towards PF were combined as a single variable and then measured accordingly. Before embarking on the analysis, it should be mentioned that when combining these items ($N = 9$), it was observed that one item was creating a skewed response that was not expected. The result of testing these 9 items using Cronbach's Alpha (a test of reliability) suggested that if the skewed item were removed, the analysis would be more statistically reliable. I therefore went into that particular item and realised that it seemed to be asking for slightly different information from the other 8 items and was indeed producing a skewed response (this item was asking about the reliability of the received PF). It would therefore be inappropriate to include it in a grouped mean variable calculation, because it did not relate directly to that variable. This item is therefore discussed as a separate item response in section 4.2.2.2. The eight grouped items were therefore as follows (results presented in table 4.9a below):

- 1- Using peer feedback technique in writing is interesting.*
- 2- Using peer feedback in learning is boring. (reverse coded)*
- 3- Reading my classmates' essays is useless. (reverse coded)*
- 4- Reading my classmates' comments is useful and beneficial.*
- 5- Peer feedback is a useful technique for improving writing skills.*
- 6- I hope my English teacher will avoid this technique to teach writing next semester. (reverse coded)*
- 7- I do my best to give helpful feedback to my colleagues.*

8- *I recommend peer feedback for future classes.*

Table 4.9: Attitudes and motivation with regard to PF.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Pre_PF_attitudes	41	3.8803	.48551	2.82	4.82
Mid_PF_attitudes	41	4.0200	.56973	2.45	4.91
Post_PF_attitudes	41	4.0355	.54351	2.55	4.91
Pre_Motivation_PF	41	3.7783	.48958	2.55	4.64
Mid_Motivation_PF	41	3.9002	.53698	2.73	4.91
Post_Motivation_PF	41	3.9424	.52095	2.27	4.82

The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was used to determine whether or not there was a statistically significant difference in the students' attitudes towards PF in the pre-, mid- and post-questionnaires (see table 4.9 above, and appendix VII, table 4.10). Using SPSS, the test was run on the pre-questionnaire results ($M = 3.88$, $SD = 0.48$; with highly positive values being obtained for 2 out of 8 items, and positive values being obtained for 6 items) and the mid-questionnaire results ($M = 4.02$, $SD = 0.56$; with highly positive values being obtained for 5 out of 8 items and positive values being obtained for 3 items), and then on the mid-questionnaire and post-questionnaire results ($M = 4.03$, $SD = 0.54$; with highly positive values being obtained for 4 out of 8 items, and positive values being obtained for 4 items) to establish whether there were statistically significant changes in the students' attitudes towards PF after each of the two interventions. A statistically significant difference was found ($Z = -1.98$, $p = 0.04$) between the pre- and mid-questionnaire results. However, no statistically significant difference was found ($Z = -0.23$, $p > 0.05$) between the mid- and post-questionnaire results. Additionally, no statistically significant difference was found between the pre- and post-questionnaire results ($Z = -1.39$, $p > 0.05$).

4.2.2.2 Peer feedback is reliable as a source of information.

In view of the skewed response to the single item on the reliability of PF, I present the data on this item separately here.

Table 4.9a: Reliability of PF.

		PRE_PF is reliable as a source of information.	MID_PF is reliable as a source of information.	POST_PF is reliable as a source of information.
N	Valid	41	41	41
	Missing	3	3	3
Mean		2.8293	2.8537	2.7561
Std. Deviation		.99756	1.10817	.96903

The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was used to determine whether or not there was a statistically significant difference in the students' attitudes towards the reliability of PF in the pre-, mid- and post-questionnaires (see table 4.9a above, and appendix VII, tables 4.10a, 4.10b). Using SPSS, the test was run on the pre-questionnaire results ($M = 2.82$, $SD = 0.99$) and the mid-questionnaire results ($M = 2.85$, $SD = 1.10$), and then on the mid-questionnaire and post-questionnaire results ($M = 2.75$, $SD = 0.96$) to establish whether there were statistically significant changes in the students' attitudes towards the reliability of PF after each of the two interventions. No statistically significant difference was found ($p = 0.83$) between the pre- and mid-questionnaire results, and no statistically significant difference was found ($p = 0.62$) between the mid- and post-questionnaire results. Additionally, no statistically significant difference was found between the pre- and post-questionnaire results ($Z = -0.18$, $p = 0.85$).

4.2.2.3 Motivation

The eight questionnaire items related to motivation to use PF were combined as a single variable and then measured accordingly (shown in table 4.9 above). These items were:

- 1- *It is worthless for me to learn how to use peer feedback.* (reverse coded)
- 2- *I always think over what we learn in peer feedback sessions.*
- 3- *If peer feedback were used outside the class, I would try to participate in it.*
- 4- *During peer feedback activities, I work very carefully and try to make sure I understand everything.*
- 5- *I have a very weak desire to use peer feedback in writing.* (reverse coded)
- 6- *Using peer feedback is a meaningless technique in developing my composition skills.* (reverse coded)
- 7- *I am willing to work hard at using peer feedback in composition.*
- 8- *If peer feedback sessions were offered in the future, I would like to take them.*

The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was used to determine whether or not there was a statistically significant difference in the students' motivation to use PF in the pre-, mid- and post-questionnaires (see table 4.9 above, and appendix VII, table 4.10). Using SPSS, the test was run on the pre-questionnaire results ($M = 3.77$, $SD = 0.48$; with positive values being obtained for 7 out of 8 items, and a highly positive value being obtained for 1 item) and mid-questionnaire results ($M = 3.90$, $SD = 0.53$; with highly positive values being obtained for 4 out of 8 items, and positive values being obtained for 4 items), and then on the mid-questionnaire and post-questionnaire results ($M =$

3.94, $SD = 0.52$; with highly positive values being obtained for 4 out of 8 items, and positive values being obtained for 4 items) to establish whether there were statistically significant changes in the students' motivation to use PF after each of the two interventions. A statistically significant difference was found ($Z = - 2.26$, $p = 0.02$) between the pre- and mid-questionnaire results. However, no statistically significant difference was found ($Z = - 0.30$, $p > 0.05$) between the mid- and post-questionnaire results. Additionally, a statistically significant difference was found between the pre- and post-questionnaire results ($Z = - 2.27$, $p = 0.02$).

To summarise, the students started off with relatively high levels of motivation with regard to using PF (see table 4.9 above), and positive attitudes towards PF, in that the values obtained were all positive and above the mid-point on the adapted Likert scale. Even when taking into account the standard deviation — i.e., when considering the range of their overall responses — the values all remain above the mid-point and positive. There was a statistically significant change in attitudes and motivation after exposure to the conventional PF, while there was a non-significant change after exposure to the new form. After exposure to both treatments, there was a statistically significant change in motivation but not in attitudes.

4.2.3 Using, rejecting and ignoring PF

It should be noted here that in this section alone, a scale from 1 to 4 was used, where 1 = None, 2 = Little, 3 = Some and 4 = A lot. As discussed earlier, a different scale was used from the one used in the sections discussed above, since quantity rather than views was being measured.

Table 4.11: Using, ignoring and rejecting the received PF.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Pre_How much peer feedback did you use?	41	2.5610	.97593	.00	4.00
Mid_How much peer feedback did you use?	41	3.2195	.79095	2.00	4.00
Post_How much peer feedback did you use?	41	3.4146	.77381	2.00	4.00
Pre_How much peer feedback did you reject?	41	1.9024	.91665	.00	4.00
Mid_How much peer feedback did you reject?	41	1.9512	.77302	1.00	4.00
Post_How much peer feedback did you reject?	41	2.0976	.70017	1.00	4.00
Pre_How much peer feedback did you ignore?	41	1.6098	.73750	.00	4.00
Mid_How much peer feedback did you ignore?	41	1.8780	.71397	1.00	4.00
Post_How much peer feedback did you ignore?	41	2.0244	.82121	1.00	4.00

4.2.3.1 Amount of PF used

The respondents were asked: *how much peer feedback did you use?* in all three stages of the questionnaire. The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was used to determine whether or not there was a statistically significant difference in the students' usage of the PF they received, as reported in the pre-, mid- and post-questionnaires (see table 4.11 above, and appendix VII, table 4.12). Using SPSS, the test was run on the pre-questionnaire ($M = 2.56$, $SD = 0.97$) and mid-questionnaire ($M = 3.21$, $SD = 0.79$) results, and then on the mid-questionnaire and post-questionnaire ($M = 3.41$, $SD = 0.77$) results for all the students in the study, to establish whether or not there were statistically significant changes in their usage of the received PF after each of the two interventions. A

statistically significant difference was found ($Z = - 3.07, p = 0.002$) between the pre- and mid-questionnaire results. However, no statistically significant difference was found ($Z = - 1.66, p = 0.09$) between the mid- and post-questionnaire results. Additionally, a statistically significant difference was found between the pre- and post-questionnaire results ($Z = - 3.83, p < 0.001$).

4.2.3.2 Amount of PF rejected

The students were asked: *how much peer feedback did you reject?* in all three stages of the questionnaire. The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was used to determine whether or not there was a statistically significant difference in the proportions that the students said they rejected in the pre-, mid- and post-questionnaires (see table 4.11 above, and appendix VII, table 4.12). Using SPSS, the test was run on the pre-questionnaire ($M = 1.90, SD = 0.91$) and the mid-questionnaire ($M = 1.95, SD = 0.77$) results, and then on the mid-questionnaire and post-questionnaire ($M = 2.09, SD = 0.70$) results for all the students in the study, to establish whether or not there were statistically significant changes in the proportion of PF they rejected after each of the two interventions. No statistically significant difference was found ($Z = - 0.18, p > 0.05$) between the pre- and mid-questionnaire results. Moreover, no statistically significant difference was found ($Z = - 1.41, p > 0.05$) between the mid- and post-questionnaire results. Finally, no statistically significant difference was found between the pre- and post-questionnaire results ($Z = - 1.09, p > 0.05$).

4.2.3.3 Amount of ignored PF

The students were asked: *how much peer feedback did you ignore?* in all three stages of the questionnaire. The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was used to determine whether or not there was a statistically significant difference in the proportion of PF the students

said they ignored in the pre-, mid- and post-questionnaires (see table 4.11 above, and appendix VII, table 4.12). Using SPSS, the test was run first on the pre-questionnaire ($M = 1.60$, $SD = 0.73$) and mid-questionnaire ($M = 1.87$, $SD = 0.71$) results, and then on the mid-questionnaire and post-questionnaire ($M = 2.02$, $SD = 0.82$) results for all the students in the study, to establish whether or not there were statistically significant changes in the proportion of PF they ignored after each of the two interventions. No statistically significant difference was found ($Z = -1.87$, $p > 0.05$) between the pre- and mid-questionnaire results. Moreover, no statistically significant difference was found ($Z = -1.07$, $p > 0.05$) between the mid- and post-questionnaire results. However, when the results of the pre- and post-questionnaires were tested, a statistically significant difference was found at the $p = 0.01$ level and with a Z value of -2.55 .

In summary, the results show that most of the PF received by the students was used (accepted). The results also suggest that the students were not expecting to use much PF before their exposure to both forms of PF technique. The students' use of the PF they received increased more after exposure to the conventional PF than after exposure to the new form of PF. Furthermore, in all three stages, the students reported that they had rejected similar amounts of PF (*Little* PF), with no statistically significant difference. On the other hand, it appears that they did not expect to ignore much PF before exposure to the treatments (ranging between *None* to *Little*), but that this amount had increased by the post-questionnaire, the difference being statistically significant. This could be linked to the students' tendency to ignore rather than reject PF they did not want to use. After exposure to both treatments, a statistically significant change was found in terms of using and ignoring, but not in rejection. It should be recalled here that ignoring is different from rejecting in that the learner can disregard received PF without disagreeing with the one who provided it, while in rejecting the learner disagrees with the PF he receives and informs the provider that he is not accepting it.

4.2.4 Preferences for macro and micro levels

4.2.4.1 Receiving on the micro level

Two items in the questionnaire inquired about the students' preference when it came to receiving PF from their colleagues on the micro level, and these were combined as a single variable. These items were:

- 1- When my colleague gives me feedback, I want to see comments indicating errors in spelling and vocabulary.*
- 2- When my colleague gives me feedback, I object to seeing comments indicating errors in grammar and punctuation. (reverse coded)*

Table 4.13: Preferences for micro and macro levels.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Pre_RCMicroFB	41	3.9634	.69273	2.00	5.00
Mid_RCMicroFB	41	4.0244	.62201	2.50	5.00
Post_RCMicroFB	41	3.9512	.67828	2.00	5.00
Pre_RCMacroFB	41	3.6463	.67309	2.00	5.00
Mid_RCMacroFB	41	3.8049	.54633	2.50	5.00
Post_RCMacroFB	41	3.9634	.64605	2.50	5.00

The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was used to determine whether or not there was a statistically significant difference in the students' preference when it came to receiving PF from their colleagues on the micro level in the pre-, mid- and post-questionnaires (see table 4.13 above, and appendix VII, tables 4.14a, 4.14b). Using SPSS, the test was run on the pre-questionnaire results ($M = 3.96$, $SD = 0.69$; with 1 out of 2 items being highly positive, and 1 item being positive) and the mid-questionnaire results ($M = 4.02$, $SD = 0.62$; with 1 out of 2 items being highly positive, and 1 item being positive), and then on the mid-questionnaire and post-questionnaire ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 0.67$; with 1 out

of 2 items being highly positive, and 1 item being positive) results for all the students in the study, to establish whether or not there were statistically significant changes in their preference when it came to receiving PF from their colleagues on the micro level after each of the two interventions. No statistically significant difference was found ($Z = -0.29, p > 0.05$) between the pre- and mid-questionnaire results. Moreover, no statistically significant difference was found ($Z = 0.83, p > 0.05$) between the mid- and post-questionnaire results. Finally, when the pre-and post-questionnaire results were tested, no statistically significant difference was found here either ($Z = 0.37, p > 0.05$).

4.2.4.2 Receiving on the macro level

Two items in the questionnaire inquired about the students' preference when it came to receiving PF from their colleagues on the macro level, and these were also combined as a single variable. These items were:

- 1- When my colleague gives me feedback, I want to see comments on the organisation of my essay.*
- 2- When my colleague gives me feedback, I object to seeing comments on the ideas I expressed. (reverse coded)*

The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was used to determine whether or not there was a statistically significant difference in the students' preference when it came to receiving PF from their colleagues on the macro level in the pre-, mid- and post-questionnaires (see table 4.13 above, and appendix VII, tables 4.14a, 4.14b). Using SPSS, the test was run on the pre-questionnaire results ($M = 3.64, SD = 0.67$; with 2 out of 2 items being positive) and the mid-questionnaire results ($M = 3.80, SD = 0.54$; with 2 out of 2 items being positive), and then on the mid-questionnaire and post-questionnaire ($M = 3.96, SD = 0.64$; with 1 out of 2 items being highly positive, and 1 item being positive) results for all the students in the study, to establish whether or not there were statistically

significant changes in their preference with regard to receiving PF from their colleagues on the macro level after each of the two interventions. No statistically significant difference was found ($Z = -1.09$, $p > 0.05$) between the pre- and mid-questionnaire results. Moreover, no statistically significant difference was found ($Z = -1.52$, $p > 0.05$) between the mid- and post-questionnaire results. However, when the pre- and post-questionnaire results were compared, a statistically significant difference was found at the level of $p < 0.05$ and $Z = -1.99$.

4.2.4.3 Preference for focusing on the macro level

Table 4.15: Preferences for one or two levels.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Pre_I prefer focusing on macro issues when giving and receiving peer feedback.	41	2.7317	1.04939	1.00	5.00
Mid_I prefer focusing on macro issues when giving and receiving peer feedback.	41	2.6341	1.01873	1.00	5.00
Post_I prefer focusing on macro issues when giving and receiving peer feedback.	41	2.7073	.84392	1.00	4.00
Pre_I prefer focusing on both macro and micro issues when giving and receiving peer feedback.	41	4.2195	.79095	2.00	5.00
Mid_I prefer focusing on both macro and micro issues when giving and receiving peer feedback.	41	4.2195	.65239	2.00	5.00
Post_I prefer focusing on both macro and micro issues when giving and receiving peer feedback.	41	4.1463	.65425	2.00	5.00

The students responded to the following statement: *I prefer focusing only on macro issues when giving and receiving peer feedback* in all three stages of the questionnaire. The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was used to determine whether or not there was a statistically significant difference in their preference for focusing on the macro level when giving and receiving PF from their colleagues in the pre-, mid- and post-questionnaires (see table 4.15 above, and appendix VII, table 4.16). Using SPSS, the test was run on the pre-questionnaire results ($M = 2.73$, $SD = 1.04$) and mid-questionnaire results ($M = 2.63$, $SD = 1.01$), and then on the mid-questionnaire and post-questionnaire ($M = 2.70$, $SD = 0.84$) results for all the students in the study, to establish whether or not there were statistically significant changes in their preference for focusing on the macro level after each of the two interventions. No statistically significant difference was found ($Z = -0.62$, $p > 0.05$) between the pre- and mid-questionnaire results. Moreover, no statistically significant difference was found ($Z = -0.20$, $p > 0.05$) between the mid- and post-questionnaire results. Additionally, no statistically significant difference was found between the pre- and post-questionnaire results ($Z = -0.11$, $p = 0.91$).

4.2.4.4 Preference for focusing on the macro and micro levels

The students responded to the following statement: *I prefer focusing on both macro and micro issues when giving and receiving peer feedback* in the three stages of the questionnaire. The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was used to determine whether or not there was a statistically significant difference in the students' preference for focusing on macro or on micro levels when giving and receiving PF from their colleagues in the pre-, mid- and post-questionnaires (see table 4.15 above, and appendix VII, table 4.16). Using SPSS, the test was run on the pre-questionnaire results ($M = 4.21$, $SD = 0.79$) and

mid-questionnaire results ($M = 4.21$, $SD = 0.65$), and then on the mid-questionnaire and post-questionnaire ($M = 4.14$, $SD = 0.65$) results for all the students in the study to establish whether there were statistically significant changes in their preference for focusing on either level after each of the two interventions. No statistically significant difference was found ($Z = 0.00$, $p > 0.05$) between the pre- and mid-questionnaire results. Moreover, no statistically significant difference was found ($Z = -0.57$, $p > 0.05$) between the mid- and post-questionnaire results, and no statistically significant difference was found between the pre- and post-questionnaire results ($Z = -0.39$, $p = 0.69$).

4.2.4.5 Focusing on one level encourages participation in PF

Table 4.17: Focusing on one level encourages participation in PF.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Pre_Focusing on one level encourages participation	41	2.6098	.91864	1.00	4.00
Mid_Focusing on one level encourages participation	41	2.9756	.98711	1.00	5.00
Post_Focusing on one level encourages participation in PF	41	2.9024	1.04415	1.00	5.00

The students responded to the following statement: *Focusing on one level of issues when giving and receiving peer feedback discourages participation in peer feedback* (reverse coded) in all three stages of the questionnaire. The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was used to determine whether or not there was a statistically significant difference in the students' belief as to whether focusing on one level encourages participation in PF in the pre-, mid- and post-questionnaires (see table 4.17 above, and appendix VII, table 4.18). Using SPSS, the test was run on the pre-questionnaire results ($M = 2.60$, $SD = 0.91$) and the mid-questionnaire results ($M = 2.97$, $SD = 0.98$), and then on the mid-

questionnaire and post-questionnaire ($M = 2.90$, $SD = 1.04$) results for all the students in the study, to establish whether or not there were statistically significant changes in their beliefs concerning the benefit of focusing on one level after each of the two interventions. A statistically significant difference was found ($Z = - 2.32$, $p = 0.02$) between the pre- and mid-questionnaire results. However, no statistically significant difference was found ($Z = - 0.43$, $p > 0.05$) between the mid- and post-questionnaire results. Additionally, no statistically significant difference was found between the pre- and post-questionnaire results ($Z = - 1.44$, $p = 0.14$).

4.2.4.6 Appreciation of the way FB was given

Table 4.19: Appreciating the way PF was given.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Pre_I appreciated the way that my classmates gave me written comments on my essays.	41	4.0732	.60788	3.00	5.00
Mid_I appreciated the way that my classmates gave me written comments on my essays.	41	4.2927	.64202	2.00	5.00
Post_I appreciated the way that my classmates gave me written comments on my essays.	41	4.1463	.61486	2.00	5.00

The students responded to the following statement: *I appreciate the way that my classmates give me written comments on my essays* in all three stages of the questionnaire. The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was used to determine whether or not there was a difference in the students' appreciation of the way PF was given in the pre-, mid- and post-questionnaires (see table 4.19 above, and appendix VII, table 4.20). Using SPSS, the test was run first on the pre-questionnaire results ($M = 4.07$, $SD = 0.60$) and the mid-questionnaire results ($M = 4.29$, $SD = 0.64$), and then on the mid-

questionnaire and post-questionnaire ($M = 4.14$, $SD = 0.61$) results for all the students in the study, to establish whether or not there were statistically significant changes in their appreciation of the way PF was given by their colleagues after each of the two interventions. No statistically significant difference was found ($Z = -1.78$, $p > 0.05$) between the pre- and mid-questionnaire results. Moreover, no statistically significant difference was found ($Z = -1.60$, $p > 0.05$) between the mid- and post-questionnaire results, and no statistically significant difference was found between the pre- and post-questionnaire results ($Z = -0.61$, $p = 0.53$).

To conclude, the results show that before exposure to each form of PF, and taking into account the standard deviations — i.e., considering the range in the students' overall responses — the students had a greater preference for receiving comments on micro features than for receiving them on macro features. This level of preference for the micro level was maintained, even after exposure to both forms of PF. In addition, their preference for receiving comments on the macro level increased significantly between the pre- and post-tests. These results suggest that the students did not like to focus on the macro level without a similar focus on the micro level. Additionally, the results also show that, before their exposure to both forms of PF, the students did not think that focusing on one level encouraged participation in PF. However, after exposure to both forms, and taking into account the standard deviation, their views seemed to have changed, with their responses giving values both above and below the mid-point on the used scale. Therefore, it can be said that some of the respondents agreed and some disagreed with the notion that focusing on one level encourages participation in PF techniques. Nevertheless, the students appreciated the way in which both the conventional and the new form of PF were given.

4.2.5 Effects on writing

Questionnaire items related to the effects of PF on writing were combined as a single variable and then measured accordingly. These questions were:

- 1- *Reading my classmates' essays helps me to improve the organisation of my composition.*
- 2- *My essays improve after revisions.*
- 3- *My classmates' comments in peer response sessions make the organisation of my composition worse. (reverse coded)*
- 4- *After each revision, the organisation of my essay becomes better.*
- 5- *My writing quality will deteriorate because of peer feedback. (reverse coded)*

Table 4.21: Effects on writing.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Pre_PF effect on writing	41	3.9561	.65040	2.40	5.00
Mid_PF effect on writing	41	4.1073	.63576	2.00	5.00
Post_PF effect on writing	41	4.1707	.60755	2.60	5.00

The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was used to determine whether or not there was a statistically significant difference in the students' beliefs with regard to the effects of PF on writing in the pre-, mid- and post-questionnaires (see table 4.21 above, and appendix VII, tables 4.22a, 4.22b). Using SPSS, the test was run first on the pre-questionnaire results ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 0.65$; with 2 out of 5 items being highly positive, and 3 items being positive) and the mid-questionnaire results ($M = 4.10$, $SD = 0.63$; with 3 out of 5 items being highly positive, and 2 items being positive), and then on the mid-questionnaire and post-questionnaire ($M = 4.17$, $SD = 0.60$; with 4 out of 5 items being

highly positive, and 1 item being positive) results for all the students in the study, to establish whether or not there were statistically significant changes in their beliefs with regard to the effects of PF on their writing after each of the two interventions. No statistically significant difference was found ($Z = -1.68, p > 0.05$) between the pre- and mid-questionnaire results. Moreover, no statistically significant difference was found ($Z = -0.76, p > 0.05$) between the mid- and post-questionnaire results. However, when the pre- and post-questionnaire results were compared, a statistically significant difference was found at the $p = 0.01$ level and $Z = -2.44$.

4.2.5.1 Critical thinking

Table 4.23: Critical thinking.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Pre_I felt that I was critical of others when commenting on peers' work.	41	3.0732	.72077	1.00	5.00
Mid_I felt that I was critical of others when commenting on peers' work.	41	3.1220	.97967	1.00	5.00
Post_I felt that I was critical of others when commenting on peers' work.	41	3.0732	.75466	1.00	4.00

The students responded to the following statement: *I felt that I was critical of others when commenting on peers' work* in all three stages of the questionnaire. The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was used to determine whether or not there was a statistically significant difference in the students' beliefs as to whether PF led them to be critical (i.e., to provide helpful comments on one another's work) when commenting on others'

work in the pre-, mid- and post-questionnaires (see table 4.23 above, and appendix VII, table 4.24). Using SPSS, the test was run first on the pre-questionnaire results ($M = 3.07$, $SD = 0.72$) and the mid-questionnaire results ($M = 3.12$, $SD = 0.97$), and then on the mid-questionnaire and post-questionnaire ($M = 3.07$, $SD = 0.75$) results for all the students in the study, to establish whether or not there were statistically significant changes in their impression of being critical of others' work after each of the two interventions. No statistically significant difference was found ($Z = -0.27$, $p > 0.05$) between the pre- and mid-questionnaire results. Moreover, no statistically significant difference was found ($Z = -0.25$, $p > 0.05$) between the mid- and post-questionnaire results. Additionally, no statistically significant difference was found between the pre- and post-questionnaire results ($Z = -0.00$, $p = 1.00$).

In conclusion, the results show that before they were exposed to both forms of PF the students believed that it would have positive effects on their writing. The findings also show that the strength of this belief had increased at a statistically significant level after exposure to both forms of PF technique. Additionally, after exposure to both forms, and taking into consideration the standard deviation, there were a range of views among the students, with responses giving values both above and below the mid-point on the scale used; in other words, some students agreed and others disagreed with the notion that they felt critical.

4.2.6 Students' comments from the questionnaires

In the pre-questionnaire, a few supplementary comments were given (10 comments) in the open-ended section. These comments included an interest in the innovation of the use of the new techniques in teaching, an appreciation of collaborative learning, and illustrations of the motivation resulting from using such a technique. For example, some

students said, “group work is helpful” and “Thank you for using new methods in teaching”. However, a recurring concern was reported related to the reliability of the given PF and to the feeling that it should be approved/supervised by the teacher. Finally, one student reported his concern about working with students of different proficiency levels. He explained after showing his interest in this technique that, “...it mostly depends on a student’s proficiency level and motivation, because you can’t help others if you can’t help yourself”.

In the mid-questionnaire, a few comments were also made (13 comments). All were somewhat similar to those given in the pre-questionnaire. For example, one student said that PF is “...an effective and quick way of seeing what mistakes I’ve made without the need to refer back to the teacher”. Another student said, “I believe that this technique is necessary for improving writing”. However, more concerns were reported in relation to the students’ proficiency level when pairing. For instance, one student said, “This technique is good. However, my colleague is supposed to be better than me when criticising my essays. If his level is lower than mine, then it is very likely that I will be given incorrect information”. Another student said, “I am very interested in this kind of method in teaching. My only concern is the variation in the students’ level. In some cases the evaluator isn’t able to criticise the writer”. Other concerns were reported as well, as in these examples: “How can I be so sure about my colleague’s PF?” and “I hope we can receive teacher FB on our essays because he knows better”.

In the post-questionnaire, interestingly, the number of comments doubled (26 comments); most of them expressed satisfaction with the technique. For example, one student explained that he wanted this technique to be used more often because it is “...the best way I have been taught in three years”. Another student said, “At the

beginning I was not very fond of this technique, but now I think it's a great technique. My writing has improved." It might be worth stating that this is the first time this particular student had written down a comment in all three stages of the questionnaire. On the other hand, two concerns were reported, one being related to the students' level of proficiency. For example, one student said, "...both students should be of the same level so they can provide PF for each other". The other concern reported by a few students was their desire to have more teacher involvement, as can be seen in the following statements made by some of the students: "I wish the teacher could be more involved" and "I hope the teacher can comment on the comments generated by the students".

In summary, the data obtained from the students' interviews suggest that they felt that PF is an important technique, which has positive effects on their learning. In addition, the majority held positive attitudes towards PF. With regard to the new form, although the interviewees expressed their desire to see more involvement on the part of the teacher, it was appreciated by the majority.

4.3 Interview findings

As this study uses a mixed method approach to data collection, interviews were conducted as a qualitative method in order to investigate students' perceptions with regard to different investigated areas. Eleven volunteers from the sample were interviewed before and after (mid- and post-interviews) exposure to the new form of PF (second intervention). The same interviewees were interviewed separately in a private room by the researcher. The interviews were then transcribed and coded under similar

themes used in the preceded quantitative section. The analysis of these themes is presented below in sub-sections.

4.3.1 Attitudes towards writing

In the mid-interviews the students reported positive attitudes towards writing. Words such as ‘good’, ‘wonderful’, ‘soothing’ and ‘positive’ were used to describe their attitudes towards writing. In the post-interviews seven of the students reported having better attitudes. For example, in the mid-interview one student stated, “I have the same feeling as when writing in Arabic”, while in the post-interview he said, “I prefer writing in English, even more than Arabic”. Moreover, words such as ‘excellent’, ‘great’ and ‘love’ were used in describing their attitudes. The reasons for their positive attitudes included: English is a universal language; it is easier to express themselves in English than in their mother tongue; writing is a key to success; writing affects other skills; writing helps in finding jobs, and English helps them learn about other cultures. Additionally, no negative attitudes were reported.

4.3.2 Motivation to learn writing

In both interviews the students reported having relatively high levels of motivation when it came to learning writing; describing their desire to learn writing to the ‘fullest extent’ and the ‘highest extent’. Moreover, they revealed a stronger desire to ‘publish articles’ and ‘academic papers’ in the post-interviews. In addition, in the post-interview 9 students reported having higher motivation than in the mid-interview. The increase in their motivation can be seen in examples such as the following: in the mid-interview one student said, “I want to improve my writing skills as far as I can. Anything I can learn, I am willing to learn”, and then in the post-interview he said, “To the furthest extent. After completing college, I plan to go abroad to develop my language, including writing”. Another student said in the mid-interview that he wanted to improve his

writing skills “...to a high extent. If I practise writing every day, my writing will improve. I prefer writing”, and then in the post-interview he said he wanted to improve his writing skills “to a great extent. The more I write, the more I learn... I want to become able to critique an article”. However, two students who started at a relatively high motivational level reported the same level of motivation in both interviews. There was no evidence of low motivation amongst the students in the interviews at either stage.

It can be concluded that the students maintained positive attitudes towards writing and a high level of motivation when it came to learning writing, and there was a further improvement in both attitudes and motivation after exposure to the new form of PF. The new form of PF, therefore, appears to be linked to a more positive effect on motivation and attitudes towards writing than the conventional form. No negative attitudes or motivation were reported.

4.3.3 Attitudes towards PF

In both stages of the interviews the students reported having positive attitudes towards PF. There was no change in their attitudes between the stages. Some of the statements that are indicative of their attitudes are as follows: “I have a great feeling. I receive the comments and accept them, even if they don’t make me feel comfortable”; “I like receiving PF, I prefer it. My objective in this college is to learn, and PF allows me to learn from my mistakes by receiving PF”, and “I have a good feeling; it is a wonderful experience because I can express myself more, with help from the comments received”. This was justified by describing advantages of this technique such as: PF allows “looking at other essays”; a “teacher can’t cover 60 students”, and so on. Nevertheless, a few concerns were reported, mostly related to the *reliability* of the received PF and the *inequality* of proficiency levels between paired students.

4.3.4 Motivation to use PF

In both interviews all the students reported being motivated to use PF, with the majority reporting having high levels of motivation in both interviews. For example, some students said, “I am very keen to use it. It’s great to receive FB from different people”; “I will always be keen to use it because this is the first time I have discovered this technique to be successful”, and “Very, very, keen” to use PF. Moreover, three students showed an increase in their motivation. One of them said in the mid-interview, “I am trying to improve my writing and, with this new technique you introduced (PF), I learned new things”, while in the post-interview he indicated an increase in his motivation by saying, “I really recommend using it because it can lead to some improvement in other modules”.

The students justified their level of motivation in terms of the advantages gained by using PF. They suggested that PF is ‘important’, ‘necessary’ and ‘essential’ for improving their writing skills. One student said, “It’s the only way to do it”, after acknowledging the difficulty for a teacher to provide a class of 50 students with appropriate and adequate FB.

In conclusion, the students started off with positive attitudes and relatively high degrees of motivation towards the use of PF. After exposure to the new form of PF, these attitudes and motivation had not changed, which means they remained positive. Neither negative attitudes nor low motivation were reported.

4.3.5 Using, ignoring, rejecting the received PF

4.3.5.1 Using

In the mid-interviews, an average of around 88% of the received PF was reported as being used. In the post-interviews, an average of 83% was reported as being used. However, it should be noted here that the PF received prior to the post-interviews was

based solely on macro level features. Although teacher micro FB was provided to the participants, it is not included because it is beyond the scope of this study.

The reported reasons for their acceptance of the received PF were that it was felt to be convincing, it pointed out their mistakes, the students believed that the evaluator was being honest, the given PF was justified, and it was beneficial.

4.3.5.2 Ignoring

In the mid-interviews three students reported not ignoring any PF, another six reported ignoring one or two comments over the whole period, and the remaining two reported ignoring an average of 25% of the received comments. On the other hand, in the post-interviews, two reported not ignoring any PF, three reported ignoring 2-4% of the comments, and six reported ignoring 5-25% of the received PF. According to them, the reasons for this were: the evaluator did not accept the receiver's justification/defence of his writing; 'no reason'; it was a point of view no one was certain of; it was thought to be inappropriate/illogical; it did not correspond to the receiver's style; the student did not want to make more mistakes; it was not convincing; there was a lack of proper justification; it did not satisfy the receiver, and it was thought that the evaluator did not understand the style. Finally, there were two recurring reasons for their ignoring a piece of PF: one was because a proper justification had not been provided (reported 9 times in both interviews); the other was because the PF referred to an aspect of their writing style (reported 5 times in both interviews).

4.3.5.3 Rejecting

In the mid-interviews seven students reported that they did not reject any of the received PF; one rejected one comment, and three rejected a few comments. On the other hand,

in the post-interviews instances of rejection were reported to have increased slightly, with only five students not rejecting any PF, one rejecting a little PF, and six rejecting an average of 13% of the received PF. The reasons reported for this rejection were: having different opinions with regard to style; appearing to be wrong; not being convincing; feeling that the evaluator did not understand the concept; having different perspectives with regard to the topic; being able to convince the evaluator of the current usage, and not knowing how to incorporate the PF. The recurring reason which was reported involved receiving unconvincing justification for the provided PF (reported 8 times in both interviews). For the most part, the rejections occurred with regard to feedback on issues related to the style of writing.

To conclude, most of the received PF was accepted and used, though the proportion decreased after exposure to the new form of PF. However, considering the fact that before the post-interviews the students were receiving PF on the macro level, it can be said that the amount used during exposure to the new form of PF was either similar to, or higher than that used during exposure to the conventional PF. In both interviews the students claimed to have ignored little feedback. However, more students had begun to ignore PF to a greater extent during exposure to the new form of PF. In addition, only a small amount of PF was rejected, although this amount had increased slightly after the second treatment. It was reported that PF was usually ignored when justification was not provided, and rejected when unconvincing justification was provided. Finally, the increase in both the ignoring and rejection of the received PF was to be expected, for the reason that macro FB can be *controversial*.

4.3.6 Preferences for the macro level

In the mid-interviews, the students reported a preference for focusing on both levels rather than just on the macro level. Various justifications were given for this: so that they could benefit more; to provide more help to others; so that they (macro and micro levels) could complement each other; focusing on one level makes you feel that something is missing, and most of the students did not have the ability to critique at the macro level. Additionally, one student reported that, “Focusing on one level led to the deterioration of our essays in the past”, as in the past, according to him, teachers mainly paid attention to micro faults.

Only one student reported more interest in macro level PF, and justified this by saying that micro level features can be corrected using word processors and various computer programs. He further claimed to understand the importance of the macro level over the micro level.

On the other hand, the post-interview findings were somewhat surprising. All the students reported preferring to focus on both levels, with *the majority showing interest in the second phase* of the study where they focused on macro level features. Here, the majority reported several ‘disadvantages’ resulting from focusing on both levels, and several advantages of focusing on only one level. According to them, some of the problems encountered when focusing on both levels were that students tended to divert most of their attention to the micro level and neglect the macro level; it can be distracting; it doesn’t allow the identification of most of the mistakes; it makes for confusion when critiquing; receiving many comments can make you feel disheartened; it can lead to the production of unreliable PF, and lots of pressure is encountered.

Furthermore, focusing on one level (the macro level) allows the students to pay attention to more important aspects of writing; it saves time; it allows them to receive

more reliable PF, to produce more in-depth PF, and to avoid weaknesses on the micro level; it does not give the feeling of being distracted; it allows more time for discussion; it encourages more learning; it improves the student's style; it produces an outstanding performance; it reduces the load and gives the feeling of less pressure; it produces constructive PF; it allows the delivery of a clearer message; it permits a deeper analysis of the essay, and it makes the student feel more comfortable.

In conclusion, the students preferred to focus on both levels when giving and receiving PF, although they acknowledged the disadvantages of focusing on two levels and the advantages of focusing on one level.

4.3.7 Effects on writing

In the mid-interviews the students reported seeing an improvement in their writing skills. They reported that their writing had been affected in ways that made them: revise their work before submission; learn new vocabulary; discover new things, such as ways of using cohesive ties and adding more clarification to the essay; begin to pay more attention to macro level features; know how to include a thesis statement; think differently; widen their mental horizon; have more practice; correct more grammar and vocabulary; produce smoother writing; improve the style of their writing, and improve the way they delivered their message to the reader.

However, in the post-interviews more interesting findings emerged. All the students reported more and deeper improvements in their writing. None of them reported the opposite. According to them, the improvement affected their writing in various ways: for instance, learning more than one way of writing; improving the content; improving the style; conducting a revision before submission; using different words; learning different vocabulary; using more complex sentences; having better coherence; paying more attention to attracting the reader; better organisation in the introduction, and

improving the presentation of the essay. It was also reported that the improvement in their writing had been transferred to other courses, the result of which was that they gained higher marks.

In brief, PF improved the students' writing. However, the improvement found after exposure to the new form of PF was greater, leading to a better effect in terms of macro features.

4.3.7.1 Reasons that led to these changes

According to the mid-interviews, there were five main reasons for these changes (improvements) in their writing. The most commonly reported reason was the fact that they received FB on their essays. The second reason was reading colleagues' essays and commenting on them. The third reason was having the ability to discuss and negotiate the received PF, thus encouraging two-way FB. Fourth, there was no formality between peers, which led to their feeling comfortable with no fear, compared with the fear found to be associated with teacher-student FB. Finally, using the evaluation checklist was also reported to affect their writing positively.

In the post-interviews, other factors including the aforementioned were reported as having an effect on their writing. These were: changing colleagues; receiving comments from the teacher; honesty on the part of the audience; no grades to give and "nothing to gain or lose" (indicating the formative use of the technique), and imitating proficient peers.

4.3.8 PF: advantages and disadvantages

In the mid-interviews, several advantages were reported. The most commonly reported advantage was that PF was found to be beneficial and to improve writing. Moreover, it: helps in solving writing problems in a short time; helps writing; increases vocabulary capacity; improves sentence structure; improves the whole essay; allows self-development; connects the writer with writing; builds relationships with others; no fear encountered such as that found when receiving teacher FB; no barrier between the students; allows receiving feedback from a friend who is on the same proficiency level; allows learning about one's mistakes; promotes the ability to express oneself and practise communicative skills; allows learning from one's own mistakes and from a classmate; is more fun; is open-minded and makes the class more interesting; having the students engaged in an activity gives the room energy; can be undertaken outside the classroom; allows the teacher to cover 50 students with FB, and can lead to improvements in other courses.

On the other hand, the disadvantages reported were few, namely, working with students of low motivation and negative attitudes towards PF can result in not paying proper attention to the critiqued essay, and thus not receiving constructive PF; it also can demotivate the other party, and the reliability of the PF can be questionable. Additionally, if two students of different proficiency levels work together, the lower-level student might "...feel disappointed because he might not have the ability to criticise the other student's work". Three students did not report any disadvantage associated with using PF.

In the post-interviews, similar as well as different advantages were reported. The different advantages reported were that PF: allows the removal of unnecessary information from the essay; allows one to learn new information from colleagues' essays; leads to writing smoothly; consumes less time in writing; involves no stress and

feels friendlier; leads to revision of the written work; encourages one to pay more attention; widens one's knowledge as a result of interaction with colleagues; allows the seeking of justification and appropriate discussion of PF. Moreover, it: allows one to be aware of the performance of other students; allows one to acquire new ways and styles of writing; teaches one to accept others' opinions, and improves one's evaluative and critical thinking skills. On the other hand, 4 students did not find any disadvantage associated with PF. Others reported a few concerns related to student seriousness, PF reliability, and pairing with colleagues of different levels of proficiency.

4.3.9 The participants' experience of traditional teaching

Although the researcher did not inquire specifically about the teaching methods the students had previously been exposed to, they constantly reported issues related to the traditional teaching of writing. The majority reported that in their previous writing course, the average number of essays they wrote was 1-2, during which hardly any FB was received, and when it was given it was directed to the whole class, since one-to-one FB was not possible. Some students reported not receiving any FB at all, or receiving merely a grade with no comments. One student said, "We didn't receive any sort of FB that enabled us to see where we'd made mistakes, and this was a frequently encountered problem". Another student said, "Unfortunately, we only write during examinations" on writing courses. Since they did not have the time to practise proper writing, some of the students explained that they had difficulty in writing essays in subsequent courses. One student described the traditional/old method as focusing on micro level features and completely neglecting other, macro features, such as style and the construction of the essay. He also explained that when the teacher gives FB, a whole sentence is underlined and no explanation or justification is given.

Despite the fact that the majority of the students reported their dissatisfaction with their previous teaching on writing courses, a small proportion of the interviewees reported their *understanding* of the fact that their teachers were unable to provide FB or allow more practice during class time owing to the large number of students enrolled in a single class.

4.3.10 Students' recommendations for improving PF

A few suggestions were made regarding ways of improving the practice of PF. Three students suggested that in each PF session, the students should work with different colleagues of different proficiency levels. This is because “you will learn from a highly proficient student and help lower level students”. One student also said that highly proficient students are the ones who should provide FB to their colleagues. Furthermore, two students suggested dividing the PF into two separate sessions — a session for macro PF and another session for micro PF. Other suggestions involved having different sessions, some using PF and others using self-assessment. The justification for incorporating self-assessment technique was so that “...the student can learn to rely on himself”. In addition, it was suggested that the teacher should comment on student PF and that this “...should guide the learners to give proper PF”.

4.3.11 Using PF in the future

When the students were asked whether or not they would recommend PF for future use, none of them, in either interview stage, rejected the notion of using it, and all of them recommended using it simply because of the advantages it offers and the skills it equips them with.

4.4 Documentary Evidence

Using documentary evidence from this study made it possible to obtain more precise results on the way students treated the PF they received. An examination of the essays developed by those who were interviewed (11 students, 10 essays each with two drafts for each essay) and of the percentage sheets⁴ (which were associated with each essay for each student; see chapter 3, section 3.8.6 for more information) made it possible to probe deeply into how much PF the students used, rejected or ignored during the two phases of the study. Since in the second phase the students were only receiving comments from each other on a macro level, here, the investigation focused particularly on this level.

In order to carry out the analysis, the numbers of comments given were calculated from the evaluation checklists for those who were interviewed, from their stated percentages in the percentage sheets, and from their second drafts, which allowed confirmation of how much PF was received and how it was treated. Having examined this documentary evidence thoroughly by triangulating the sources, a general finding was obtained. In the first phase, the average amount of received macro comments was 1-2 comments from each student; while in the second phase, the average doubled - up to 3-4 comments per student. The detailed findings of our investigation in this regard are presented in the following section.

4.4.1 Using the received PF

In the first phase (the first 5 essay topics), the overall average of the macro PF used was 73%. In more detail, six students accepted 100% of the macro PF, three students accepted an average of 50%, with the remaining two accepting an average of 35%. In the second phase (the final 5 essay topics), the overall average of the used macro PF

⁴ The students were required to fill in a sheet that inquired about the percentages of the received PF and how much macro and micro PF was used, ignored or rejected.

decreased to 62%. In more detail, four students accepted 100% of the macro PF, two students accepted an average of 81-90%, three students accepted an average of 70-80%, while the remaining two accepted an average of 15-35%.

4.4.2 Ignoring the received PF

In the first phase, the overall average of ignored macro PF was 23%. In more detail, three students tended to ignore macro PF, among whom two ignored 50-100% and one student ignored 25-35%. In the second phase, the overall average of the ignored macro PF increased slightly, to 32%. In more detail, four students tended to ignore macro PF, among whom three students ignored 50-100%, and one ignored 10-35%.

4.4.3 Rejecting the received PF

In the first phase, the overall average of rejected macro PF was 4%. In more detail, 0-1 students tended to reject macro PF. The amount of rejected PF was around 25-35%. In the second phase, the overall average of rejected macro PF increased slightly, to 7%. In more detail, one student tended to reject an average of around 30% of the macro PF.

4.4.4 General observations

When investigating the students' essays, several interesting points were observed. It was noticed that, in the first phase, the students did not tend to accept more PF related to the macro level than related to the micro level. In other words, in the first phase, the students accepted more micro than macro comments.

Additionally, in both phases, I observed a common phenomenon, which was that when a student decided not to incorporate some feedback, he would ignore rather than reject it. Furthermore, the students' written comments in the evaluation checklist in the second phase appeared to be different from those written in the first phase. The second phase comments were given with more care, as in providing illustrations and selecting the

proper wording, with more comments provided. Finally, the *style* of writing seems to be the common issue leading to *not accepting* the received PF; for example, one student justified his ignoring of a comment by saying, “Because my passion is what gives my writing its style”.

To conclude, during exposure to the new form of PF, the amount of PF given doubled. Most of the received PF was used, although the proportion decreased slightly during the second phase. The fact that the amount of PF given *doubled* during the second phase, and that the proportion that was used decreased *slightly*, indicates a higher acceptance of macro PF. Comments tended to be ignored rather than rejected. Moreover, the ignoring of comments increased during the second phase, while the number of rejections remained fairly similar, and these were likely to occur regarding issues related to the *style* of writing. This indicates that the students preferred to ignore comments rather than to reject them with no evidence found to explain this notion.

4.5 Verbal protocols

In order to gather more in-depth data from the students, a few sessions were audio-recorded while the students were giving and receiving PF. I observed and interrupted the conversations, seeking clarification of any unusual *phenomena* occurring during the one-to-one PF sessions.

A noticeable phenomenon that seemed to occur in many cases was that of students giving micro PF during the second phase of the study, even though this was deemed to be the teacher’s task. The following excerpts illustrate this phenomenon:

Excerpt 1

T⁵: Why did you give micro comments?

S1⁶: The micro comments were things that reoccurred, i.e., happened more than once. And it seems that they are owing to force of habit.

Excerpt 2

T: Why did you comment on the grammar?

S1: I think it's because we were used to it. And during the second phase, I couldn't help it. In addition, because there is too much information in the essay, I felt lost and found it difficult to track faults at the macro level; therefore, I tended to shift to locating grammatical and spelling mistakes.

S2⁷: I agree; we are used to focusing on grammatical mistakes.

Excerpt 3

S1: The spelling in your essay needs to be worked on.

T: Why did you ask about spelling?

S1: Because writers usually commit this mistake. I guess I do it unconsciously, and as a second language learner, you become used to paying attention to spelling. It was pointed out all the time as part of our learning journey. Now it's something in our blood. In other words, I believe it results from the way we were taught over several years.

S2: I noticed that when we read a novel, we don't pay any attention to micro features; the whole of our attention is given to macro features. However, in writing classes, grammar and spelling are commented on.

⁵ Teacher/researcher

⁶ Student giving PF

⁷ Student receiving PF

The second phenomenon observed was that a few students started giving PF without using the evaluation checklist. The following excerpts illustrate this tendency.

Excerpt 4

T: Why didn't you use the evaluation checklist?

S1: Because this is our eighth essay. We know this checklist by heart.

Excerpt 5

T: Why didn't you use the evaluation checklist?

S1: Well, I remember almost all the questions from the evaluation checklist.

Excerpt 6

T: Why didn't you use the evaluation checklist?

S1: I memorised all the questions, you can say I absorbed them. I believe this is because I've practised giving PF using the checklist so many times to the extent that I memorised it.

S2: I agree that he commented clearly on my essay.

To conclude, the findings show that the students found it difficult to prevent themselves from commenting on micro issues, even when they had been clearly asked not to. According to some of them, this was the result of teaching they had received in the past, which laid particular emphasis on these micro features. Another reason for this is that

the students may have found it difficult to avoid commenting on recurring mistakes, and that commenting on too much information at the macro level can be difficult. The findings also show that a number of students did not use the evaluation checklist in which the criteria for good writing were embedded, because these criteria had been internalised. Unfortunately, no other evidence from the data of this study was found to support this finding.

4.6 Field notes

With the aim of gathering any evidence related to this study, field notes were recorded. After an introductory presentation of the new study had been given to the sample, they showed a great deal of interest in the study and were thrilled to participate. They expressed their enthusiasm to improve their writing skills. The majority explained their weaknesses in writing and their strong desire to overcome these problems. They explained their dissatisfaction with *traditional teaching* methods in writing, and how this had led to a deterioration in their writing skills.

During the PF sessions, it was noticed that students with low proficiency levels focused on micro level aspects, spending a good deal of time on each point, which led to difficulty in managing the negotiation time. Additionally, low-level students seemed to struggle with giving PF to their colleagues. Moreover, students reported contacting each other outside the class in order to fulfil their tasks.

It was observed that disagreements usually arose over issues related to “style”. This usually happened among highly proficient students. Some students claimed that such disagreement was ‘interesting’ and ‘enjoyable’. Moreover, the pairing could have caused a communication breakdown on the part of some students. For instance, two

students were particularly keen to work together, but after a few sessions they started to sit apart from one another and to work with different individuals. I believe this was because of the differences in their proficiency levels, as reported in the interviews and as suggested by their tests results. On the other hand, some pairs built stronger relationships because of these sessions.

During the second phase of the study, other points of interest emerged. For instance, because this was the first time the students had received FB from the teacher/researcher in the course, they were occupied with checking the teacher's FB, and became distracted from giving PF. Additionally, some students came to ask for further clarification of the questions in the macro evaluation checklist, with one student implying that there was less pressure during the process. Interestingly, the students still paid attention to micro issues.

Misinterpreting (misunderstanding) the title caused some difficulty to both the writer and the reader. For example, some students wrote about something completely irrelevant; consequently, their essays on some occasions appeared to be distracting and unclear for the readers. Furthermore, the students required a shorter period to complete their essays: whereas in the past it had taken them 35-40 minutes to develop the first draft, in the second phase 30-35 minutes was enough. This could be owing to the enormous amount of writing they did during the study, as compared to the amount of practice they had had in their previous writing module.

4.7 Summary of the findings

This study investigated the impact of introducing two treatments (i.e., T1: the conventional form of PF technique, and T2: a new form of PF technique) on ESL learners in an undergraduate level writing course. The main purpose of the study was to investigate the impact of involving learners in using the peer feedback technique (in both its forms), as a collaborative learning technique, based on *macro* level issues, on their attitudes towards peer feedback and writing, on their motivation to give and use peer feedback and to learn writing, on their writing performance, on their preferences for focusing on one level, and on their understanding of what constitutes good writing. After presenting the results of this study in this chapter, this section provides a brief summary of the main findings using qualitative and quantitative evidence in relation to each theme described above, while indicating the source. It was thought appropriate to present the findings in a table to enable the reader to make easy comparisons between both forms in order to form a global picture of the findings and to track changes, if any. The main hypothesis in this study was that the new suggested form would out-perform the conventional form in all aspects investigated in the study; however, the results do not seem to provide clear-cut evidence in support of our hypothesis, as the discussion in the following chapter will show.

Table 4.27: Summary of the study's findings.

Researched theme	Research tool	Before practice with both forms	Findings: conventional PF (T1)	Findings: the new form of PF (T2)
<i>1- Attitudes towards learning writing</i>	a) Qns. b) Inter. c) Field N.	a) positive. b) N/A ⁸ . c) positive.	a) minor positive change. b) positive. c) N/A.	a) minor positive change. b) minor positive change; no negative attitudes. c) N/A.
<i>2- Motivation to learn writing</i>	a) Qns. b) Inter. c) Field N.	a) positive. b) N/A . c) positive.	a) sig. positive change. b) relatively high level. c) N/A.	a) minor positive change. b) minor positive change; no signs of low motivation. c) N/A.
<i>3- Attitudes towards using PF</i>	a) Qns. b) Inter. c) Field N.	a) positive. b) N/A. c) positive.	a) sig. positive change. b) positive. c) N/A.	a) minor positive change. b) same as before. c) N/A.
<i>4- Motivation to use PF technique</i>	a) Qns. b) Inter. c) Field N.	a) positive. b) N/A. c) positive.	a) sig. positive change. b) high level. c) N/A.	a) minor positive change. b) same as before, with three interviewees reporting higher levels. c) N/A.
<i>5- Effects on writing</i>	a) Writing tests. b) Qns. c) Inter.	a) low: average 3.43 out of 10. b) participants thought there would be positive effect. c) N/A.	a) sig. positive change: average 4.52. b) minor positive change. c) positive effect.	a) greater sig. positive change: average 6.14. b) minor positive change. c) deeper and greater positive effect.
<i>5.1) Treating PF received</i>	a) Qns. b) Inter. c) Doc. Evidence.	a) participants thought they would use some of PF they received; reject & ignore little. b) N/A.	a) sig. increase of PF used; minor increase in ignoring and rejecting. b) most PF was used; ignored and rejected little. c) most PF used, little ignored, and	b) a slight increase in using, ignoring and rejecting. b) minor decrease in using, and minor increase in rejecting and ignoring. c) minor decrease in using PF, and

⁸ Not Available.

		c) N/A.	less than that was rejected.	slight increase in ignoring and rejecting.
5.2) <i>Preferences for both forms</i>	a) Qns. b) Inter.	a) prefer the conventional PF. b) N/A.	a) preference for the conventional PF. b) preference for the conventional PF.	a) preference for the conventional form. b) prefer the conventional PF, while showing great interest in the new form of PF.
6- <i>Understanding good quality in writing</i>	a) Writing tests. b) Inter. c) Verbal prot.	a) weakness at macro level. b) N/A. c) N/A.	a) sig. positive improvement at macro level. b) reported effects on macro level. c) N/A.	a) greater sig. improvement at macro level. b) deeper effects at macro level reported. c) learners became acquainted with the criteria embedded in the evaluation sheet.
7- Additional supporting data	a) Verbal prot.	a) N/A.	a) N/A.	a) learners' tendency to provide <i>micro</i> PF during practice with the new form, which is prohibited.
	a) Field N. b) Inter.	a) number of participants explained their dislike of traditional teaching in writing. b) N/A.	a) N/A. b) traditional teaching reported to have negative effects on learners.	a) N/A b) traditional teaching reported to have negative effects on learners.

4. Discussion

In this chapter, the findings presented in the previous chapter are examined in order to answer the research questions (see chapter 3, section 3.3). The chapter is divided into two sections; the first section deals with the research questions, while in the second section the implications of the results are discussed and a general discussion of the main findings is presented.

Section 1

This section examines the impact of involving learners in using the peer feedback technique, as a collaborative learning technique, based on *macro* level issues, on their attitudes towards peer feedback and writing, on their motivation to give and use peer feedback and to learn writing, on their writing performance, on their understanding of what constitutes good writing, and on their preferences for receiving PF on the macro or micro levels, or on both levels.

R-Q 1: Do students' attitudes and motivation concerning writing change as the course progresses?

Sub -Q 1.1: *What are their attitudes towards writing before and after using peer feedback?*

Sub -Q 1.2: *What is their motivation to write before and after using peer feedback?*

It is first of all important to say that the findings show that the students in the study had positive attitudes ($M = 3.86$) and relatively high levels of motivation ($M = 3.77$) towards

learning to write before they were exposed to either treatment (i.e., the conventional or the new form of PF), and that this could be a result of their excitement at being involved in such a practice — in other words, the Hawthorne effect (which is an effect that concerns some field researchers such as Adair (1984)) might have been a factor — which would reduce the use of traditional teaching techniques. In other words, the positive attitudes and the level of motivation may have resulted from the students' dislike of traditional teaching methods and their excitement about the change that might be brought about through their involvement in the experiment. In this regard, and as recorded in the field notes I wrote at the beginning of the data collection period, a number of participants approached me indicating that they had a high level of interest in the study and enthusiasm for improving their writing skills. They discussed the weaknesses in their writing and their strong desire to overcome these problems, in addition to their dissatisfaction with traditional teaching methods, and attributed their lack of progress in writing to the use of these methods. The results therefore support other criticisms of traditional teaching methods in Saudi and non-Saudi contexts, such as those made by Littlewood (1984), Shih (1986), Kohonen (1992), Schofield and Alhazmi (2007) and Vassall-Fall (2011).

The conventional PF had a slight positive effect on attitudes towards writing (pre: $M = 3.86$; mid: $M = 4.0$) as well as a statistically significant positive effect on motivation to learn writing (pre: $M = 3.77$; mid: $M = 3.90$, $p = 0.024$). On the other hand, an increase, although non significant, was found after exposure to the new form of PF, with higher motivational levels (mid: $M = 3.90$; post: $M = 3.94$) and more positive attitudes (mid: $M = 4.0$; post: $M = 4.09$). Therefore, the only statistically significant effect was in increased motivation after using the conventional PF. However, the qualitative findings from the interviews, in which interviewees reported higher motivational levels and more positive attitudes after practice with the new form, are not reflected in these general

mean scores from the questionnaire findings. For this reason an attempt was made to investigate the extent of agreement between specific interviewees' responses in their interviews and the responses they gave in the three stages of the questionnaire. It was found that the quantitative and qualitative responses matched on this individual basis, which suggests a greater consistency of their responses than the general whole-group responses. In light of this, I suggest that those who volunteered may have done so because they already had positive attitudes and high levels of motivation, which probably illustrates the disadvantage of non-probability sampling used in this research. Therefore, this is considered one of the limitations of the current study, since participants with negative attitudes or low motivation ended up not being interviewed. It is also possible that the findings of the interviews were not reflected because the adapted scale (which is a five-point scale) did not allow for enough sensitivity (i.e., as an eight-point or higher scale). In this regard, and based on an empirical study, Dawes (2012) suggests that there can be a difference in the data obtained if a Likert scale is used in a more sensitive manner (i.e., if a scale higher than a seven-point scale is used).

The finding that PF of any kind can enhance attitudes and is perceived as a useful technique concurs with findings from other studies (e.g., Chaudron, 1984; Blain, 2001; Rollinson, 2005; Yang et al., 2006; Alhazemi & Schofield, 2007; Gielen et al., 2010b; Grami, 2010; McMahon, 2010; Albeshier, 2011). It is suggested in the literature that attitudes can affect the way individuals use learning strategies (Erwin, 2001; Perloff, 2003; McKenzie, 2010), and that having positive attitudes is likely to help in achieving learning goals (Oppenheim, 1992; MacIntyre et al., 1998; Dörnyei & Skehan, 2003; Burden, 2004; Dörnyei et al., 2006). The finding of this study, based on the writing test results (as discussed later in this chapter), is that the students' positive attitudes also impacted on their significant progress in terms of writing quality, which concurs with what is reported in the above-mentioned studies.

Moreover, the finding that PF stimulates motivation also concurs with the findings of other studies (e.g., Tsui & Ng, 2000; Rollinson, 2005; Yang et al., 2006), and supports other claims that collaborative work can lead to better motivation (Daiute, 1989; McLane, 1990; Boscolo & Hidi, 2007; De Bernardi & Antolini, 2007), in the sense that motivation is high when collaborative work is utilised. Other factors that may have led to maintaining better motivation in this study include the fact that the PF technique, as a collaborative learning tool, encouraged communication and made writing more interesting (Boscolo & Hidi, 2007), and the fact that PF provided opportunities for the learners to write more, with the process approach to writing being implemented, which is also thought to be encouraging (Nelson, 2007). Here it should be noted that the PF technique was implemented as an integral part of the process approach (see sections 2.3,11), and therefore allowed an effective use of the process approach, as noted by Lundstrom (2006). In other words, this study suggests that the PF technique and the process approach are connected, and it is thus proposed that teachers and learners could benefit from the integration of these two methods in the classroom.

R-Q 2: What are the students' attitudes and motivation concerning peer feedback?

***Sub -Q 2.1:** What are their attitudes towards PF before and after using peer feedback?*

***Sub -Q 2.2:** What is their motivation to use PF before and after using peer feedback?*

This research question investigates learners' attitudes and motivation in relation to the PF technique. It was seen that the students held positive attitudes ($M = 3.88$) towards PF and relatively high levels of motivation ($M = 3.77$) to use PF in learning writing skills before their exposure to both forms of PF, although the majority of respondents

had not previously used PF in their learning. This finding could be the result of their enthusiasm to be involved in, and acceptance of, this new technique, as suggested by the findings from the open-ended section of the pre-questionnaire, in which a proportion of the students expressed the view that they would appreciate using this technique and that they would like the teacher to use collaborative learning methods.

After they had been exposed to the conventional PF, attitudes (pre: $M = 3.88$; mid: $M = 4.02$; $p = 0.04$) and motivation (pre: $M = 3.77$; mid: $M = 3.90$; $p = 0.02$) improved at a statistically significant level. A further improvement was also found after they had been exposed to the new form of PF, although this was statistically insignificant (M of attitudes = 4.03; M of motivation = 3.94). In other words, the conventional PF appeared to lead to a greater change in attitudes and motivation to use PF in the learning of writing skills than the new form. There is a possibility that the conventional PF produced better attitudes and motivation than the new form because it was introduced first. Otherwise, the reason could be related to their preferences for focusing on macro or micro level features (as will be discussed later on in this chapter), in that having a preference for receiving PF on both levels at once could lead to higher ratings for both attitudes and motivation. Generally speaking, attitudes and motivation improved as the course progressed, and no sign of any deterioration in attitudes or motivation was observed.

These findings correspond to findings reported in other studies that investigated the effect of PF on attitudes (e.g., Jacobs, 1998; Rollinson, 2005). Additionally, the one-to-one PF sessions appear to have filled the feedback gap (a gap that is defined by the literature (e.g., Yang et al., 2006) and reported by the participants in the interviews in the current study) caused by the use of traditional methods to teach writing (Nunan, 1992; McWham et al., 2003; Gielen et al., 2010b), and this may be one reason for the students' positive attitudes towards both forms of PF. In higher education it is difficult

for teachers to provide one-to-one tutoring, yet the use of PF makes this possible (Nunan, 1992; McWham et al., 2003; Berg et al., 2006). Additionally, Good and Brophy (1990) and McKenzie (2010) argue that attitudes can be affected through exposure; therefore, they can be stimulated through experiencing different situations. In this study, exposing students to both forms of PF affected their attitudes.

With regard to motivation, the reasons for such high levels of motivation can be inferred from the students' qualitative descriptions of PF as being 'important', 'necessary' and 'essential' for improving writing skills, which supports the argument that collaborative learning is an essential component in student-centred classrooms (Nunan, 1992; Brufee, 1999; Jong, 2009). Moreover, McMahon (2010) concluded in his study that students could be motivated to use PF if it was used exclusively in formative situations and preceded by proper training in using the criteria and the technique itself. These recommendations were carefully considered when the intervention for the current research was planned; thus, it could be a factor that led to increasing motivation to use and positive attitudes towards PF.

Hyland and Hyland (2006) argue that FB consolidates and encourages learning, and Ashford and Tsui (1991) argue that FB can stimulate individuals to improve their performance (as will be discussed later on in this chapter). In this regard, the fact that PF allows students to receive PF can be motivating and seen as an additional factor in the finding of relatively high levels of motivation among the students in this study, especially since they had been deprived of it in the past. Thus, and in support of Askew's (2000) argument, this study finds that PF is a crucial factor in successfully improving writing quality (as discussed in the following research question).

R-Q 3: What is the effect of PF on students' writing?

Sub-Q 3.1: Do they use, ignore or reject the received feedback?

Sub-Q 3.2: What are the reasons for using, ignoring or rejecting the received feedback?

Sub-Q 3.3: What is the effect on the overall quality of their writing?

Sub-Q 3.4: How does their understanding of what constitutes good writing change?

Treating the received PF

Before the students started using the PF technique, participants thought they would use between a 'Little' and 'Some' of the PF they would receive (see chapter 4, section 4.2.3), suggesting they had some doubts about comments generated by their colleagues. This can be linked to learners' reported concerns regarding the reliability of PF. In a way, such responses were to be expected, since the majority had received only the teacher's FB in the past, and were thus likely to consider it as the only reliable source of information. Interestingly, the majority of the PF was used during practice with the conventional PF, suggesting that the participants felt the PF generated by their colleagues was better than they had expected it to be and was likely to be beneficial and helpful in improving their essays. Moreover, there was a slight additional increase during practice with the new form. Generally speaking, the finding that the majority of the PF received was used conflicts with the finding of Min's (2006) study that the average amount of PF used and reported in the literature is 39%, and supports the claim in the literature that peers can provide helpful and beneficial PF (Jacobs, 1998; Rollinson, 2005; Gielen et al., 2010b; Grami, 2010; McMahon, 2010). It is possible that the systematic training in PF provision the participants had before exposure to the experiment encouraged them to have more trust in their colleagues' PF, which led to their accepting more comments. This justifies the emphasis on training when

introducing PF technique to learners that appears in the literature (e.g., Bruffee, 1978; Lockhart & Ng, 1995; Paulus, 1999; Rollinson, 2005; Min, 2006; Lundstrom & Baker, 2009).

Although findings from the interviews show that the majority of the received PF was used, they also show (and this is also supported by documentary evidence) that there was a minor decline in the proportion that was used after exposure to the new form of PF. However, the documentary evidence also reveals that the number of macro comments the students were given had actually doubled (see chapter 4, section 4.4.1). Thus, if we allow for this increase, despite the minor decrease in the *proportion* of PF that was used, there was actually an increase in the overall amount of the received PF that was used. In this regard, the increase in the number of comments generated during the practice with the new form of PF can be linked to the advantages of this type of PF as seen by the majority of the interviewees (see chapter 4, sections 4.3.6 and 4.3.8). For example, they reported that the new form lessens the pressure when giving PF; hence, a larger amount of more accurate PF is given. Some of the interviewees also reported that the conventional PF (i.e., giving and receiving PF based on both macro and micro level features) made them feel distracted and under pressure, which led to their giving less PF. From this it is possible to speculate that the greater the pressure the students feel to produce feedback, the less feedback they produce, and possibly the poorer the quality of the PF. Additionally, the interview findings suggest that the students felt they were in a less cognitively demanding situation when exposed to the new form. Evidence supporting this was found when comparing essays from the first and the second phases, as in the latter better explanations and more comments were given. Finally, it is apparent that the findings from the interviews were not reflected in the questionnaires; as pointed out in the discussion of research question 1, above, this is very likely to be

the result of adopting purposive sampling to select the interviewees, who, for the reasons mentioned earlier, were not representative of the whole sample.

In relation to the students' rejection and ignoring of the received PF, they expected to reject and ignore a small amount of the PF (reported as 'little'), with the amount they expected to ignore being slightly less than the amount they expected to reject (as reported in the questionnaires). After their exposure to the conventional PF, a slight, but not statistically significant, increase in these amounts was reported. There was also an increase in the amount of PF the students rejected and ignored after practice with the new form of PF, though this change was not statistically significant either. Apparently, neither form led to a reduction in the amount of PF that was rejected or ignored by the recipients; on the contrary, both led to a slight increase.

Although findings from different sources reveal that only a little PF was ignored or rejected, a minor conflict in the data is found. The questionnaire findings reveal that the amount that was ignored after practice with each form was slightly less than the amount that was rejected, while, on the other hand, documentary evidence and interview findings indicate the opposite. This may indicate that the adapted scale in the questionnaire was not sensitive enough to capture an accurate measure of learners' views.

Although a slight increase in the amount of rejection and ignoring was reported during practice with the new form, it can be argued that there is some controversy regarding the macro level features in writing, in the sense that the views of both the writer and the evaluator may be acceptable, especially with regard to issues relating to the *style* of writing, as the data suggest (see chapter 4, section 4.4.4). It may also indicate that the participants were developing a discriminating and critical approach towards writing. The increase can also be linked to the fact that the amount of PF received doubled

during the new PF phase — in that more PF given leads to more rejection and ignoring. Despite the fact that researchers have spent time investigating how to make learners accept more comments from their fellow students (e.g., Min (2006), who investigated how training can lead to generating comments of high quality and, thus, more PF is likely to be incorporated), rejecting and ignoring a proportion of the received comments can be seen as a good sign, in that it indicates that learners are assuming ownership of their own essays by not accepting anything they see as unsuitable for their work, which is in line with Tsui and Ng (2000).

Reasons for the way PF is treated

There are several reasons for learners to accept the received PF. As far as the interview findings are concerned (see chapter 4, section 4.3.5), one of the reasons, and the most common, is when the received PF was found to be convincing. If a student made a suggestion or a comment that seemed logical, there may have appeared to be no reason for not accepting it. By accepting the comment the writing quality is expected to improve and, thus, learning may occur. This finding is supported by Trigwell et al.'s (1999) study, in which it was found that PF improves learning quality. Another reason reported in this study with regard to accepting the received PF is that it points out students' mistakes, a finding that was also reported in Tsui and Ng's (2000) study. This suggests that the learners have to perceive the identified problems as genuine and the given suggestions as logical. An additional reason is that the received PF was seen to be beneficial. When a student encounters a helpful/beneficial suggestion, this can lead to better outcomes and can represent an opportunity for him to take. In this regard, several studies have reported the usefulness of employing the PF technique in learning

classrooms (e.g., Rollinson, 2005; Yang et al., 2006; Gielen et al., 2010b; McMahon, 2010).

With regard to the ignoring of the PF, there are several reasons for this (see chapter 4, section 4.3.5), the most common of which was the fact that some PF was given with no proper justification, which contradicts the findings of Zhao's (2010) study that there is a tendency on the part of students to accept the PF received without understanding the reason for requiring the modification. For learners, offering proper justification may be presumed to be especially important when feedback is provided by peers, since if the writer understands the reason for needing to make such modifications, this will encourage him to accept the PF, which is in line with Gielen et al. (2010a). As stated earlier, providing proper justification was a common reason for the received PF being accepted. Therefore, if such justification is not presented, the PF is likely to be either ignored or rejected. Other occasions on which PF was ignored were when the writer had tried to defend his writing and the evaluator had insisted on his point of view. In a case like this the writer can feel 'marginalised' from his own writing by the evaluator, which can lead to his ignoring the comment. This finding suggests that the learners in this study may have developed ownership of their essays, a finding that concurs with that of Tsui and Ng (2000).

Finally, the PF received can be rejected for several reasons (see chapter 4, section 4.3.5). The interview findings revealed that when the PF was accompanied by unconvincing justifications there was a common tendency for it to be rejected. This finding, which was reported earlier as well, suggests that there is a strong relationship between the availability of proper justification and the way in which PF is treated (i.e., in that if such justification is available, PF is likely to be accepted, otherwise it will be ignored or rejected). Rejection could also occur when the writer was able to convince the evaluator of the correctness of his current usage. It may be speculated here that this

could happen when the writer is of a higher proficiency level than the evaluator, so that he is able to defend his own writing. Interestingly, it was commonly reported that rejection occurred in relation to comments on the style of writing.

A final point can be made here with regard to the rejecting, ignoring and using of the received PF. The tendency for the students to treat PF in these three different ways suggests that the learners were negotiating meaning with each other, and were thus involved in a rhetorical situation, which is seen as an important factor in learning writing (Bitzer, 1968), by means of which motivation to write can be stimulated (Fiorenza, 1987). It also suggests that both forms involved the participants in an active learning situation — in that they searched for academic meaning, took greater responsibility for their learning by solving their own problems with their fellow students, and attempted to master writing skills by performing the task (Denicolo et al., 1992).

Effects on writing proficiency

Since this part of the investigation is seen as the ‘golden heart’ of this research, it is presented here in detail. Data were gathered using various different instruments. Starting with the administered tests (i.e., pre-, mid- and post-tests), it was found that the average score in the pre-test (i.e., before the students were exposed to either form of the PF technique) was 3.43 out of 10. This can be considered to be low relative to the highest point on the used scale, and may be indicative of the students’ low achievement in their past learning, when traditional teaching methods were commonly employed and FB was reported as being scarce. According to the field notes, a few students reported that they were dissatisfied with traditional teaching methods and that this was the reason for the poor quality of their writing skills. However, after they had been exposed to the

conventional form of PF, a statistically significant improvement was found in the mid-test, with a mean of 4.52 out of 10. Moreover, a statistically more significant improvement was found after exposure to the new form of PF, with a mean of 6.14 out of 10, which suggests that the new form is linked to a greater positive effect on learners' writing.

Generally speaking, both improvements can be seen to confirm the notion that the students were not satisfied with the learning outcomes they had obtained as a result of the use of traditional teaching methods in their previous learning environments, as suggested by evidence obtained from the observations and the interviews. It also suggests that the use of either form of PF technique can lead to improvements in students' writing, with the new form linked to greater improvement. Moreover, when each of the writing categories (i.e., mechanics, organisation...etc.) was tested separately after exposure to each form of PF technique, a statistically significant improvement was found. It is therefore suggested that the use of both forms can have a positive impact on all six categories. The findings also suggest that each form can impact writing positively in terms of micro and macro levels, with the new form having a greater effect on most of the macro features. Such a finding was to be expected, especially since when using the new form learners were forced to shift their attention to the macro level (although there is evidence of a tendency on the part of the learners to provide some micro PF). This may be because a more concentrated focus on one level can lead to more learning. The finding from the interviews that the effects reported after practice with the new form were related more to macro issues supports this finding (see chapter 4, section 4.3.7). For example, some of the reported effects included: better organisation of the introduction, improving the content, improving the style, better coherence, producing a higher quality of presentation for the essay, and considering attracting the reader's attention. This suggests that the use of the new form of PF resulted in the introduction

of an important component of motivation in writing (as discussed by Nelson, 2007), which is to attempt to move the reader (i.e., writing in order to affect others).

The interview findings also point to other effects on writing. For instance, two interviewees reported that PF had led them to revise their work before submission. This may indicate that learners were encouraged to assess themselves by revisiting their essays once more before final submission, which suggests that the participants were becoming more self-reliant. In this regard, McMahon (2010) concluded that using self-assessment techniques in conjunction with PF technique can have an even more positive impact on learners. It was unfortunately beyond the scope of the current study to investigate self-assessment, and it is therefore not possible here to speculate further on the subject.

The questionnaire findings suggest that the students believed that the use of PF technique would affect their writing positively, with a slight positive change in their responses after practice with each form. These minor positive changes may indicate that the students believed in the positive impact of PF, but that this belief was slow to improve after practice with both forms of PF; however, the results of the mid- and post-tests jointly suggest that their writing actually improved *significantly* at a statistical level. Although the test results suggest a significant positive change in the students' writing, it is possible that the participants needed time in order to be able to sense an actual significant change in their own writing, which explains the significant change in their responses between the pre- and post-questionnaires (i.e., before and after practice with both forms). Taking into account the interviewees' claim that they had previously had very few opportunities to practise writing, whereas during this experiment they had had more engagement in writing by critiquing fellow students' work, having their own work reflected upon, and practising writing extensively, it was to be expected that the participants would have a change for the better in their own writing.

Since the writing test results did not reflect the questionnaire responses, it was decided to investigate whether there were any factors that could have affected the participants' beliefs in this regard. By conducting a *post hoc* analysis of the raw data obtained from the three stages of the questionnaire, one item was identified that might explain the situation. It was observed that the majority of the participants were questioning the reliability of the PF provided by their fellow students both before and after practice with both treatments (with means of 2.82 for the pre-questionnaire, 2.85 for the mid-questionnaire and 2.75 for the post-questionnaire), and this was also reported as a concern in the interviews. From these findings, it can be concluded that the participants saw the issue of the reliability of the received PF as a factor that hindered them from believing more strongly in the positive impact PF could have on writing.

Moreover, according to the findings obtained from the three stages of the questionnaire, when the students were asked whether PF affected their critical thinking, the overall average rating was that of feeling 'uncertain' (i.e., not sure), which is the mid-point on the adapted scale. In other words, the students held different views, ranging from disagreeing with the notion to agreeing with it, with one group of participants having reservations regarding its effect on critical thinking. This finding may indicate that learners are still to develop their self-confidence as writers and critical readers. Additionally, perhaps because they were more used to being judged than to judging others, and perhaps because they still believed that critical judgments should only be made by the teacher, there was some hesitation to absorb the notion of being critical. In other words, I argue that the students were demonstrating their critical skills, but did not yet realise that this is what they were doing, although no evidence was gathered to specifically test this notion, as the data collection instrument was not designed to inquire thoroughly into this matter. Lee and Loughran (2000) argue that critical thinking has positive effects on students' progress, and in this study the students demonstrated

significant progress in relation to writing development after practice with both forms of PF. This finding is supported by the findings of other studies (Lock & Ng, 1995; Paulus, 1999; Panitz, 2001; Rollinson, 2005; Lundstrom & Baker, 2009; McMahon, 2010). In this regard, other researchers have found that learning collaboratively enhances the sense of criticality (Higgins et al., 1992; Keys, 1994; Gokhale, 1995; Murdock & Wilson, 2008; Turnbull et al., 2010), and I suggest this is a useful and potentially important issue to consider in future studies, given the increasing interest in how to develop criticality.

Several reasons were reported for the improvement in writing after practice with both forms of PF technique: for example, the fact that participants had: received PF on their essays, knowing that FB is considered essential in learning (Askew, 2000); read colleagues' essays and commented on them, which concurs with the findings from Tsui and Ng's (2000) study; had no formality between peers, which leads to feeling comfortable with no fear, as opposed to the fear found in teacher-student FB, which concurs with findings from other studies (e.g., O'Brien, 2004; Rollinson, 2005), and the fact that the PF was not involved in their final evaluation (not used summatively), which followed the recommendation made by McMahon (2010) in his study. Additionally, it is possible that the involvement of teacher micro FB in the new form was a factor in the more significant progress made by the learners in the post-test, which suggests that the students may feel more comfortable when the teacher is involved.

In brief, an examination of the effect PF had on the students' writing quality revealed that both forms had a significant positive effect, taking into account the fact that the majority of the students began at relatively low levels of writing quality before they started practising using PF. This finding that PF can lead to an improvement in writing quality is supported by findings from some other studies (Brufee, 1978; Chaudron, 1984; Lock & Ng, 1995; Paulus, 1995; Hu, 2005; Yang et al, 2006; Lundstrom &

Baker, 2009; Grami, 2010; Hu & Lam, 2010), although it conflicts with the results obtained by Alhazemi and Schofield (2007), who reported only a slight improvement in writing. It was also found in the current study that each form of PF led to a significant improvement in all six categories of writing features, with the new form leading to a greater improvement in these categories. As a result, it is suggested that PF led to a deeper improvement in students' writing skills. Ruys et al. (2010) and Tolmie et al. (2010) argue that collaborative learning can improve the conceptual grasp and application of skills. Tolmie et al. (2010) suggest that this is particularly important because the context in which collaborative learning is utilised can become more positive, and because learning tension is reduced as a consequence of the increase in mutual understanding between learning parties. The findings of this study show that peer learning can be highly effective (Ruys et al., 2010; Tsuei, 2011), and that it can allow improvements to be made (Ashford & Tsui, 1991; Askew, 2000). Finally, it was found that the new form of PF led to a more positive effect on macro features than on micro features. This finding partially corresponds to the findings of Albeshier's (2011) study that reported an improvement in macro but not in micro features. Both this study and Albeshier's (ibid.) were conducted in a Saudi context, which supports our initial argument that macro features do not seem to be nurtured in this particular context, and that stimulating them can yield significant outcomes.

Effects on understanding of writing quality

As discussed earlier (see chapter 2, section 2.11), a good piece of writing is one that chiefly has good quality macro level features; therefore, this part was answered by gathering evidence based on this perspective. The data were collected in an English department, in which essay writing is taught in two separate modules (introductory and

advanced); in this study the advanced module was used (see chapter 3, section 3.6). In relation to the previous module (i.e., the introductory module), the interviewees stated that they had rarely written more than one or two essays during the whole course, and that they had rarely received FB; consequently, second drafts were seldom written. From this, it can be inferred that there was insufficient practice in writing, and as a result the students may not have had enough skill to develop a proper essay. This is an indication that these students possessed a poor understanding of the criteria of good writing and of what constitutes a good quality essay before exposure to both treatments.

The results of the pre-test suggest that the participants' current writing level produced essays of poor quality in all of the six categories of Paulus's scoring rubrics. In other words, when examining the pre-test scores, it can be clearly seen that the majority of the students scored very low on micro as well as on macro level features (see appendix VII, table 4.26). This is seen as an indication of the weaknesses in the students' writing despite the fact that they were in an advanced stage of their academic learning (i.e., expecting to graduate at the end of the following term). According to some of the students, the use of traditional teaching in the past was a reason for the weaknesses in their writing skills. For a student, the knowledge that his writing skills are weak in some respects, and the conviction that previous teaching methods are partially to blame for this weakness, in addition to the fact that graduation is not far away, can be (in general) depressing. From this, it can be established that before the students were involved in this study, the majority did not have a clear understanding of what constitutes good writing or a good essay.

After practice with the conventional and the new form of PF, both the mid- and post-test results revealed a statistically significant improvement. Moreover, when a thorough analysis of the results of both tests (mid and post) was conducted to investigate the effect of using these two forms of PF on the six writing categories given by Paulus, a

statistically significant improvement was found in each of the six categories. Furthermore, when these categories were classified into macro and micro levels and the changes at both levels were compared, the results suggest that both forms tend to lead to an improvement in both levels, with more improvement in the macro level features. The findings also suggest that both forms can have more effect on the macro than on the micro level, with the new form leading to a greater improvement on the macro level. The findings from the interviews also suggest more impact on macro features after practice with the new form. It can be speculated here that the fact that in the traditional teaching macro features were overlooked was a factor that led to the more significant positive change in macro than in micro features after using both forms of PF. This supports our earlier argument that the participants in this study were not of a status that allowed them to know what good quality in writing is. Generally speaking, it can be said that improvements in writing features, especially the macro features of writing, are an indication that the writers are acquiring a better understanding of writing quality (Flower, 1979; Min, 2006).

It was reported in the interviews that during practice with the conventional form, the students diverted most of their focus onto micro issues when they provided PF and tended to neglect macro level issues. It was also found in the verbal protocol sessions that during practice with the new form there was a tendency for the students to pay some attention to micro features, even though they had been prohibited from doing so. This finding supports the findings of Flynn (1982), Keh (1990), Leki (1990), Mangelsdorf and Schlumberg (1992), Brokkamp and Van den Bergh (1996), Chenoweth and Hayes (2001), Hyland (2003b), Jones et al. (2006) and Van Steendam et al. (2010). Some students explained this phenomenon to be the result of their previous teaching experiences, where the teacher tended to place an enormous emphasis on micro issues; therefore, the fixing of micro issues became a priority for the students. From this

perspective, it can be said that macro features had been somewhat neglected, and that the majority of the students had formed the notion that a good piece of writing should be something that has no grammatical, punctuation or structural errors. Zamel (1985) argues that teachers should prioritise macro features, with Leki (1991) recommending that both teachers and students should believe that rich content is more important than grammatical perfection. Although there was a tendency to focus more on micro features than on macro features during practice with the conventional PF, and a tendency to focus on the forbidden micro features when practising the new form, there was greater improvement in macro than in micro level features after exposure to both forms of PF, and this improvement was even greater after exposure to the new form. Since the greater impact on macro features was associated with the new form, it can be said that forcing the writers to focus on only one level of writing features can have a greater impact.

Moreover, evidence from the verbal protocol sessions shows that during exposure to the new form of PF, some students began to provide PF to their colleagues without using the evaluation checklist. When they were asked why, one student said, “we know this checklist by heart”, another said, “I remember almost all the questions from the evaluation checklist”, and a third student said that he had “memorised all the questions, you can say I absorbed them.” From this it is suggested that these students had internalised the criteria for good writing embedded in the evaluation checklist, which may be linked to the fact that they had acquired a better understanding of good writing quality. It is suggested that the repetitive use of the evaluation checklist (in that it was used a total of 10 times in both phases) played a role in helping them to absorb the criteria. Gielen et al. (2010b) suggest that practising giving PF can clarify learning goals and help students internalise them, while Flynn (1982) suggests that a lack of awareness of writing criteria can lead to a focus on micro issues and a neglect of the more

important elements in writing. Generally speaking, McMahon (2010) concludes that engagement in assessment criteria can help in producing effective PF. The findings of this study also demonstrate learners' improvement in terms of writing proficiency after practice with each form, with the new form leading to greater improvement, which can be linked to the learners forming a better understanding of writing quality.

R-Q 4: What is the students' attitude towards giving and receiving feedback from their colleagues based on macro level features?

Sub-Q 4.1: Do students prefer to give and receive feedback based on macro or micro level features?

Sub-Q 4.2: How does the students' preference affect their reaction to the peer feedback they receive?

Sub -Q 4.3: How does the students' preference affect their attitudes and motivation concerning peer feedback?

Learners' preference for both forms of PF technique

Since a knowledge of the learners' standpoints on and perceptions regarding the suitability of the introduced new form were particularly important for this study, in that this should allow deeper insights into the technique to be obtained and enable the researcher to make further recommendations for the future, and also because of the complexity found in the data obtained for this aspect of the study, it was deemed appropriate to discuss this aspect of the investigation in detail. The questionnaire findings show that before the learners' exposure to both forms of PF technique, they started off with a preference for receiving PF from their fellow students on micro level as well as on macro level issues. This finding contradicts Hedgcock and Lefkowitz's

(1994) argument that ESL students value macro features over micro features and are more concerned with receiving macro FB than micro FB. After practice with both forms of PF, a minor increase was found in the students' preference for receiving PF on both levels, which may indicate that they considered both levels to be almost equally important. This finding supports what they reported in the interviews, which was that the two levels (macro and micro) complement each other. It may also indicate that they wanted to see comprehensive PF related to a variety of writing features in order to produce writing of a higher quality at both levels. However, after exposure to the two forms of PF, the students reported a stronger preference for receiving macro comments at a statistically significant level. This can be seen as an indication of their having a deeper understanding of the importance of macro level features, since the participants reported that in the previous courses they had attended, their teachers adopted a traditional teaching perspective and prioritised micro features over macro features (see RQ 3). In a nutshell, both questionnaire and interviews findings strongly suggest that the participants had a preference for focusing on both levels.

In more detail, in the questionnaires, when the students were asked whether they preferred to focus on macro issues separately when giving and receiving PF, the majority said they did not prefer to receive only macro level PF from their classmates. Although micro FB was supplied by the teacher during practice with the new form of PF, the students did not seem to like being prevented from providing comments to, or receiving them from, their fellow students on this level. It is possible that because the teacher did not offer one-to-one FB sessions and, thus, discussing the FB was not possible, the learners needed someone to collaborate with. A counterpart question was asked in the questionnaire inquiring whether the students would like to give and receive PF based on macro and micro features. The students reported wanting to receive and give PF on the two levels both before and after exposure to both forms. When they were

asked whether focusing on one level alone encourages participation in PF, at the beginning they stated that it did not, but after they had used the conventional form of PF, a statistically significant improvement was found, reaching the mid-point on the adapted scale. This statistically significant positive change does not mean that they had developed a preference for macro level over micro level PF, but indicates that they had started to acquire a better understanding of the importance of macro features. On the other hand, after exposure to the new form, the participants were less inclined to agree that focusing on one level alone encourages participation in PF. These responses may be indicative of their desire to work with micro features in PF sessions, and perhaps also of their dislike of the idea of the one-level focus.

It is important to speculate on the possible reasons for their desire for the two-level focus from an external point of view, even though they offered several reasons in the interviews (see chapter 4, section 4.3.6). It is possible that they found it difficult to abandon micro features because this is the type of FB they were used to receiving in the past. It is also possible that they may have felt that micro PF was the only type of PF they were likely to succeed in generating and incorporating, and they may also have thought that the focus on macro issues would draw attention to the weaknesses in their writing skills. As a result, they may have thought that if they focused on the macro level, it was likely that the PF would be either of less significance or of no significance at all, a notion that is supported by what they reported in the interviews, which was that most of the students do not have the ability to critique at the macro level. Another possible reason for this is that the participants were very concerned about developing their skills at the micro level and felt that giving and receiving PF on this level would help. Thus, although objective evidence was found of a significant positive change in their learning after exposure to the focus on one level, this was not reflected in their stated preferences. A further discussion of this point is presented in section 5.2 below.

Although the findings provide clear evidence of the learners' preference for focusing on both levels, the majority of the interviewees in this study reported a greater interest in the second phase of the study (i.e., while practising the new form of PF), where they were asked to focus on macro features when giving and receiving PF. More interestingly, they described several advantages of focusing on the macro level alone, and several disadvantages of focusing on both levels, and yet their preference was for focusing on both levels. This situation may explain their hesitation to accept the new concept of the one-level focus, although it is not clear what caused this hesitation. Did the new form introduce a dramatic change of concept that they found alarming? Should there have been a transitional phase between the use of the two forms of PF in order to prepare the participants for the newly introduced one-level concept? Unfortunately it is not possible to be certain about this at this stage.

According to the interview data, some of the disadvantages encountered when focusing on both levels at the same time were: the students tended to divert most of their attention to the micro level and neglect the macro level, which corresponds to findings from other studies (Broekkamp & Van den Bergh, 1996; Trusscot, 1999; Chenoweth & Hayes, 2001; Van Steendam et al., 2010); it can be distracting; producing unreliable PF, which is in line with the argument that students are less capable of self-editing lexical errors (Ferris, 2004); a great deal of pressure is encountered, and it is time-consuming, a finding which is supported by other studies (e.g., Trusscot, 1996; Trusscot, 1999). On the other hand, the students explained that focusing on one level (macro level) allowed them to: pay attention to the more important aspects of writing (i.e., macro features); save time; receive more reliable PF; produce more in-depth PF; overcome weaknesses at the micro level; not feel distracted, which corresponds to the argument that focusing on two levels at once leads to writers becoming lost (Gomez et al., 1996); improve

style; less pressure; deliver the message clearly; and obtain a deeper analysis of the essay.

It is interesting that in the interviews the students identified several disadvantages of focusing on both levels, and several advantages of focusing on the macro level alone, and yet clearly stated their preference for focusing on both levels (i.e., macro and micro level features). When the students were asked in the questionnaires about whether they appreciated the way PF was given, their responses after they had practised both forms of PF were positive. In other words, they did not seem completely to reject or resist the idea of focusing on one level (i.e., the new form of PF) when asked about it indirectly in the questionnaires (i.e., by including item number 24: *I appreciated the way that my classmates gave me written comments on my essays*). As discussed earlier in this section, the students reported not wanting to focus on one level, and this response was given when they were asked directly. Hence, the important question that arises here is: why did students who had acknowledged the advantages of focusing on macro level issues and the disadvantages of focusing on both levels, and who seemed to appreciate the way PF was given in the new form (the one-level form), show resistance to accepting the notion of focusing on one level when asked directly? This is in addition to the fact that the post-test scores (i.e., after practice with the new form of PF) revealed statistically significant progress, even greater than that found in the mid-test (i.e., after practice with the conventional PF).

This resistance to focusing on macro level issues may be explained by the fact that changing beliefs and perceptions can be difficult. These students had been accustomed to particular teaching methods, and their previous learning experiences had been completely different; thus, radically to change this experience by completely prohibiting the giving and receiving of micro PF (in a PF session) all at once could be a rather aggressive strategy, and could thus lead to rejection. This notion is in line with Benesch

(1999) and Turuk (2011), who argue that students might resist the introduction of new thinking in learning contexts. Evidence of this was found during the recording of some of the verbal protocol sessions, when some students started giving micro PF while practising with the new form (when they had been specifically instructed not to give micro PF, which was deemed to be the teacher's task). They were asked what their justifications were for doing something they had been told not to do, and some of the justifications included reasons such as, "I think it's because we were used to it." Another student elaborated further, saying:

"Because writers usually commit this mistake. I guess I do it unconsciously, and as a second language learner you become used to paying attention to spelling. It was pointed out all the time during our learning journey. Now it's something in our blood. In other words, I believe it is the result of the way we were taught over several years."

In other words, the traditional methods adopted by their teachers in the past could have been the cause of the students' current difficulties in changing their preferences: i.e., their current beliefs were derived from previous practices. Another question that may be asked here is: what preferences would the students have had if they had known the statistically significant improvements they would make after exposure to the new form of PF? And would their views be changed? If so, how they would change?

Effects of preferences in treating the received PF

No evidence was found in the answers obtained to the previous research questions or in the data to suggest a link between the students' preferences and the way they treated the

PF they received. The findings for RQ 4.1 showed that the students preferred focusing on both levels. Moreover, the findings for RQ 3 showed that they used most of the PF they received when practising using the conventional PF, and that little PF was rejected or ignored. The findings also revealed that the students reacted differently to the PF they received when using the new form of PF (i.e., in that there was an increase in the amount used, rejected and ignored); however, it has also been shown that this increase was associated with an increase in the overall amount of PF provided by the students. Therefore, as far as the data of this study are concerned, no connection could be established between the students' preferences and the way they treated the PF received. This apparent absence of any connection may suggest that the participants actually appreciated the PF they were receiving and were aware of its importance for their own learning, especially since they reported receiving scant FB in the past.

Effects of preferences on attitudes & motivation

In order to answer this final part of the fourth research question, the findings from other research questions were used. It was found that before and after using each form of the PF technique, the majority of the students preferred to focus on both levels (i.e., macro and micro levels). Several justifications were given for this preference, although at the same time acknowledging the advantages of focusing on one level and the disadvantages of focusing on both levels (see RQ 4). It was also found that the majority of the students had positive attitudes towards and motivation for using PF, and that the level of positivity increased significantly after using the conventional form of PF, with a slight improvement after using the new form (see RQ 2). Therefore, from these findings, it can be said that when the students were able to focus on both macro and micro levels, as they preferred to do, in the conventional PF sessions, this had a positive

effect on their attitudes and motivation. In this regard, Rollinson (2005) discusses the view that PF technique can be used to create a relaxing environment, thus leading to increased motivation to write.

However, when they were not allowed to focus on both levels as they preferred, this did not have a negative effect on the learners' attitudes and motivation concerning PF, but rather resulted in a minor positive change. It is possible that the reason no negative effect was found was owing to the fact that the advantages of the new form were recognised and to a certain extent appreciated by a number of students. A learner's attitudes and motivation are not necessarily negatively affected by a technique because his/her preference goes against it, provided the advantages are recognised. This can also be related to the notion that learners may find it difficult to change their perceptions of the way FB should be given — in that they demonstrated an unwillingness to change their existing preferences — so that ESL/EFL learners may find difficulties in, for example, abandoning micro PF. One reason for this, as stated earlier, is that when the students in this study had received PF from their teachers in the past, a great emphasis was placed on micro issues. As a result, their subconscious understanding of FB could have had a strong bearing on how they felt about micro PF, and thus abandoning it may not have seemed feasible in their minds.

Section 2

This section will address the most interesting points that appeared in the results of this study. An attempt to speculate concerning the reasons behind these points will be made. Where possible, discussion related to other issues, such as the assumptions of the study, will also be presented.

5.2.1 General discussion

PF as a technique is recommended for practitioners, especially in higher education. It allows more frequent one-to-one conferences/attention to learning, creating student-centred environments. Despite its disadvantages, it can benefit the educational context in various ways, such as: creating actual learning situations and active learning environments, and allowing the learner to take over and become accountable for his/her learning. In writing courses in ESL/EFL contexts, student writers often complain about the scantiness of FB on their written work, which is likely to stand in the way of their accomplishing the intended learning goals. The PF technique is found to be filling this gap in learners' learning, if used properly. Moreover, in light of how many activities this technique can be applied to, it allows students to accomplish goals in a relatively short period of time, requiring minor involvement by the teacher.

In answering the research questions of this study, a few interesting, yet puzzling points emerged. The most important of these is the fact that traditional teaching is linked 'robustly' to the findings of this study; bearing in mind that no deliberate attempt was made to investigate the subject but rather, it emerged naturally. When the PF technique in both its forms was introduced, it received wide acceptance by the students, who held positive attitudes and relatively high levels of motivation before and after practice with both introduced forms of this technique, which indicated their desire to experience new learning situations. Although the literature proposes a number of strategies for learning writing skills, the use of this technique by itself over a period of 15 weeks (a full academic term) continued to be appreciated by the students — in that they did not become bored with using it throughout the academic term — in learning writing skills, even though they continued to report concerns about the reliability of the PF received and about the equivalence of proficiency levels when they were assigned to work together. One possible reason for this appreciation was the fact that teacher FB had

previously been limited and infrequently provided; another reason could be the fact that the participants enjoyed the transformation from passive to active learners. They were offered the chance to take greater responsibility for their own learning and the learning of their fellow students. They worked collaboratively in order to solve writing problems in one another's essays. They were seeking the mastery of important learning skills such as critical thinking and evaluative skills. Additionally, the assessment criteria were shared with the students by using the evaluation sheets, which could have led to their deeper engagement in the learning. Denicolo et al. (1992) suggest that involving the learner in such situations can actually promote active learning. From a different perspective, it may be said that traditional teaching had led to positive 'side effects' on the participants of this study, in that they were keen to accept any technique that would fill the teacher attention gap regardless of any concerns they might have about it.

Another interesting finding in this study is that during practice with the new form, the participants started giving micro PF, although they had been clearly instructed not to do so. The reason for this tendency, given by the participants themselves, is the way in which they were instructed in the past — i.e., in that their teachers emphasised the micro over the macro level. As a result, micro PF was given, as one student put it, "unconsciously". Additionally, it is possible to say that the participants simply did not like to be told what to do or not to do, especially since they were adults in higher education. Other interpretations may suggest a link between micro FB and learners' preference for this type of FB, as will be discussed later on in this section. This discovered phenomenon raises the important question of whether or not this tendency could have affected the results of this study. Could it be linked to the statistically significant positive change in learners' micro level writing features after practice with the new form? Did this minor focus dedicated to micro features affect the participants' views in relation to macro and micro levels? Unfortunately we are not in a position to

evaluate this situation owing to lack of evidence, but it is definitely an area to be examined in future research.

Although evidence was found that both forms of PF lead to significant positive progress in writing, it is believed that the previous lack of FB provision resulting in a failure to raise learners' awareness of writing features might also have been a factor in this significant improvement. Moreover, this study has also established, based on evidence obtained during the research, that in the past teachers have neglected macro features somewhat and have stressed the importance of micro features, and this fact may help to explain some of the findings in this study: for instance, first, the finding that the students made more progress after exposure to the new form than after exposure to the conventional form of PF, since in the second phase of this study macro features received full peer attention (or at least most of it, since other evidence in this study showed a tendency on the part of the learners to pay some attention to micro features).

Secondly, the emphasis on micro features in the learners' previous teaching might have influenced their preference for one or two levels, which appears to support Truscott's (1999) claim that students' attitudes towards micro level FB can be affected by teachers' practices and beliefs. It was revealed in this study that the students appreciated the new form of PF, which focuses on macro issues, acknowledged its advantages, and reported several disadvantages of focusing on both levels; in addition, they showed greater improvement in writing scores after exposure to the new form of PF. Yet their preference was for focusing on both levels, which may be an indication of their strong relationship with micro features, which supports the conclusion from Alhazmi and Schofield's (2007) study that the students in their study were "not ready to abandon the traditional surface error focus of their classroom" (p: 237). This may also help to explain the fact that in the current study attitudes and motivation regarding writing and PF did not improve at a significant level after exposure to the new form of PF, since it

prevents learners from providing micro PF. We discussed in the previous part some of the possible reasons why the learners adhered firmly to the micro level. One speculation was that they may have lacked the skills necessary to critique at the macro level; therefore, they wanted to stay with what they were familiar with. Another possibility is that they may have found themselves more concerned with developing micro features and thought that critiquing at this level may lead to greater mastery of those features.

On this basis we have argued that the participants in this study resisted changing their old perceptions and refused to accept the new approach. A few studies have suggested that there could be such resistance on the part of students (e.g., Benesch, 1999; Turuk, 2011), but these studies have not suggested which factors (e.g., time, implementing different procedures or frequency of exposure) could play a role in reducing such resistance. Perhaps the design of our study, in which the conventional form was introduced before the new form, was one of the factors that led to this resistance, since the participants were already acquainted with teacher FB that was given on both levels (although more focus was given to the micro level), and this conception could have been reinforced after exposure to the conventional form. Therefore, by the time they came to practise the new form, they would have found it even more difficult to change.

Moreover, the change found from the questionnaire data in relation to the students' preferences for macro features after each treatment was slight and insignificant. However, when the responses obtained before practice with both forms (i.e., in the pre-questionnaires) were compared to the responses obtained after practice with both forms (i.e., in the post-questionnaires), a statistically significant positive change was found. Although this change does not reflect the participants' preference for focusing on macro features, it does suggest that longer practice can lead to more preference for macro features. This supports our previous argument that the participants were resistant to change, but also suggests that there is a possibility to make a change.

Since we have argued that learners' preferences may change (even though this change can be difficult to make) in the long term, an important question that may be asked by researchers, and by practitioners in particular, is: how should we react to learners' preferences? For example, in this study the participants did not have a preference for the new form of PF, although they actually improved significantly while practising it; therefore, in light of these findings, should learners be forced in future practices to practise the new form, or should they just be offered the conventional form they prefer? In this regard, the literature does not seem to offer a consensus. For example, Truscott (1996; 1999) suggests that learners' preferences should not be taken into account if they are unhelpful to their learning. On the other hand, Bitchener and Ferris (2012) encourage teachers to consider their learners' preferences as this may encourage learner-involvement.

It is difficult to judge whether or not it is appropriate to provide micro FB/PF on students' essays, especially since differing views are found in the literature (e.g., the well known enduring debate between Truscott (1996) and Ferris (1999)). However, evidence from this study — in which learners showed significant progress in their writing tests after receiving FB on both macro and micro levels, in addition to the fact that they reported having a preference for both levels — suggests that micro FB is essential for writing development in the Saudi Arabian context. The current study introduced a new form of PF technique in which micro FB is provided by the teacher, not the learner, as it is believed that provision of such FB needs to be dealt with professionally; consequently, the students showed statistically significant improvements in their writing performance.

This study also suggests that different effects can occur with learners of different proficiency levels when they are exposed to different forms of PF. By probing into the students' writing tests results (see chapter 4, section 4.1.1), it was observed that those

who started at mid or high levels in writing (i.e., before exposure to both treatments) were likely to show greater progress after practice with the new form than after practice with the conventional PF. On the other hand, two different patterns were observed among those who started at low levels: one group of students made greater progress after exposure to the new form than after exposure to the conventional form, while another showed greater progress after exposure to the conventional form than after exposure to the new form. It can thus be speculated here that the new form may be more suitable for particular types of student, in that it may have a more significant impact on those who maintain mid and high proficiency levels in writing. It is possible that students with such proficiency levels have already developed acceptable linguistic skills, and thus find themselves less occupied/concerned with micro features when learning writing; as a result, more attention is given to macro features. This would also explain why the group that started at a low level showed greater progress when practising the conventional form that requires them to address both micro and macro features at the same time. In this regard, Kamimura (2006) found that high level students tend to provide more macro PF, whereas the PF produced by low level students tends to be more related to micro features. However, our previous speculation does not explain why the other group of low level students showed greater progress after practice with the new form, because this matter is beyond the focus of this study. In summary, the findings of this study suggest that the new form is more suitable for high and mid level learners, but its suitability can vary in terms of low level students. Evidence from this study did not suggest any reasons for the contrast in the achievement of low level students, and this matter was in fact beyond the scope of this study, and an area that can be looked at in the future.

Although all six categories of writing features were affected positively at a statistical level after exposure to each of the two treatments, two macro features — *development*

and *cohesion* — and one micro feature — *structure* — in particular were affected a great deal more after practice with the new form. From this it is suggested that the new form has a profound impact on macro level writing features in particular. We argued earlier (see RQ 3) that the new form reduced tension on the part of the learners, and that this resulted from the fact that the participants had a smaller area of focus when practising the new form, and thus it created a setting that promoted a better understanding of the introduced concepts. If we compare this situation to the situation created by the conventional form, it can be noticed that the load on the student was nearly double in the latter case, not to mention the fact that working on micro features requires the evaluator to take into account numerous strict grammatical rules, which can be time-consuming and distracting. Therefore, learners can be led into a situation where they find themselves obliged to prioritise one level of features over the other, either consciously or unconsciously. In this regard, evidence from this study suggested that the learners had a tendency to pay unconscious attention to micro features even when they were not supposed to. All the interviewees reported in the post-interviews having more and deeper improvements in their writing — in that most of the reported positive effects were related to macro features. For example, after practice with the new form, they reported that PF allows the removal of unnecessary information from the essay; has no stress and feels friendlier; and encourages one to pay more attention. These statements suggest that the participants may have attained a new level in their conceptual grasp of learning writing owing to their practice with the new form of PF, especially since the above effects were not mentioned at an earlier stage — i.e., after practice with the conventional PF.

It is felt necessary to highlight other unaccounted for factors in this study that may have been linked to participants' significant positive progress in writing. One of these is the fact that the participants had had the chance to practise producing several essays (10

essays, two drafts each), as compared to the one or two essays they reported writing in the past. The variety of the treatments introduced to the participants is another possible factor, in that participants were exposed to different learning styles allowing them to gain more experience in, and perhaps knowledge of, learning.

In conclusion, the findings of this study suggest that the use of both forms of PF has a positive impact on learners. Although the new form can have a greater impact on students' writing, a few concerns on the part of the learners were found regarding this form. Additionally, the results of the study suggest that the way the students responded and performed with regard to a number of issues, such as writing tests, attitudes and preferences, was closely linked to their educational background.

5. Conclusion

This chapter comprises a brief summary of the main findings of this study. An additional section in which the limitations encountered in this study are described is also included, along with a critique of the methodological design of this study. Finally, a section is dedicated to making recommendations for future researchers and practitioners who are interested in the area covered by this study.

6.1 Brief summary of the study

Learners can progress significantly in an ESL context if engaged properly in the learning process. However, the utilisation of traditional approaches in teaching the English language, in writing classrooms in particular, has proven to be a barrier that prevents such progress and engagement from taking place. One reason for this is the fact that, in most cases, these approaches do not seem to allow for the provision of adequate and effective FB (i.e., scant FB). The findings of this study show that the students had been affected negatively by such approaches. It is important for a teacher in higher education to comprehend the importance of providing FB for his/her students, and to understand that it is desired by the students, owing to its positive impact on their learning. Although introducing PF as a collaborative learning technique has been proven to be helpful in filling this gap, its effectiveness may not be acknowledged by practitioners. This study, through an empirical investigation, has taken an important step forward by investigating the impact of focusing ESL learners on providing macro feedback when using the PF technique; despite the complexity of the findings obtained,

the end result was found to be positive changes in the students' learning. The study also demonstrates that research can be integrated within the classroom over a long period of time.

Collaborative learning can enhance attitudes and motivation, and PF technique in particular can be an interesting activity that helps to create student-centred classrooms and promotes active learning environments, in which students take control over their own learning and teachers have more time for observation and for making further enhancements with regard to learning. It has been revealed by this study that the use of PF in both its forms has positive effects on attitudes towards writing and the PF technique, and increases motivation to learn writing and to use the technique itself. This is in addition to the fact that the students themselves were enthusiastic about using PF technique and keen to improve their writing skills before exposure to both treatments.

It has been seen that macro level features of writing can be neglected by both teachers and students, and that focusing the students on these features alone in PF sessions can lead to significant progress in writing, as well as to a better understanding of what constitutes good quality in writing. Learners in an ESL context are likely to have an interest in mastering micro writing features, which is likely to lead them to neglect the macro features that are considered important in the advanced-level English academic programmes in higher education. An interesting finding of this study was that the students tended to prioritise micro features over macro features, although they were well aware of the importance of mastering the macro features. It was also found that focusing on the macro level leads to a greater effect on writing, and on macro features in particular.

Although the students acknowledged several advantages of focusing on the macro level and how this can create a more relaxing atmosphere, and although they also

acknowledged the disadvantages of focusing on both macro and micro levels, they retained a preference for micro features. It has been argued that this is the result of the traditional methods adopted in the teaching they had previously been exposed to, which had suggested to these learners that mastery of writing is mainly about micro features. Moreover, it was interesting to note the difficulty the students had in changing their perceptions regarding the giving and receiving of PF on one level. We have suggested that the learners' predilection for the micro level could arise from the fact that learners are more concerned with developing micro features than macro features. Another reason could be the learners' lack of confidence in critiquing at the macro level, which led to their developing a stronger bond with what they were already acquainted with.

The results of this study may encourage teachers to become more innovative in their teaching, in that they should be encouraged to look for new learning styles that are more suitable for their learners. They should become more reflective on the learning process and on how it can be improved, while having a belief that there are no hopeless situations in learning contexts. We have seen how an innovative learning technique led to positive effects on learning, while the teacher's role was limited (a factor that should solve a major problem in higher education, taking into account the large numbers of students enrolling every year). The results suggest that learners can respond positively to changes in learning even if they harbour concerns about these changes, which in turn points to the learners' willingness to learn. In this sense, it can be said that the problems encountered by learners were caused partly by not introducing innovation in the learning context, and that we should therefore take all the necessary measures that will allow us to evaluate the context and thus introduce changes in learning strategies.

To facilitate the road ahead of those teachers who find themselves interested in changing their learning styles but do not necessarily know how to do so, they are encouraged to continue from the point reached by this study. In other words, this study

used an action research approach in which the conventional PF technique was introduced and its impact on learners was investigated; then a new form of the PF technique was suggested as an innovative way of introducing change to learners and its impact was investigated. Therefore, comparisons were made and an evaluation of the findings was carried out. From this point, those who are interested could continue to make overseen modifications to the new form, taking into account their teaching experiences and knowledge of their learners, and investigate what positive changes can be produced. This should be carried out as part of a normal teaching schedule, not as a separate task. One good example of this is the study carried out by McMahon (2010), who searched for insights into the PF technique over a period of *four years* (see chapter 2, section 2.10). Further recommendations and suggestions are given in section 6.3 below.

Finally, in this study, the positive change in learners' writing may result from the different variables involved in the study. Some of these variables are: the fact that the novelty of introducing new approaches to teaching writing might have increased participants' motivation to learn; the fact that the participants were offered an increased amount of feedback, with teacher micro-FB being offered during the second phase; and/or the fact that they practised writing extensively throughout the data collection period. However, it is not possible to account for which factors impacted the participants' writing scores or the nature of this impact, owing to the design of the study that did not allow for examining the impact of each treatment in isolation.

6.2 Limitations and evaluation of the study

In this section the limitations of the current study are discussed, and an attempt is made to evaluate its overall design. As in many other pieces of empirical research, time is considered to have been the main limitation in this study. It was not possible to investigate the long-term effect of introducing the new form of PF on the students, which could have lead to a deeper investigation into different phenomena, such as whether or not the learners' preference for the new form would change in the long term. Furthermore, this study was carried out on male students in an English department in Saudi Arabia, and did not involve female students. This is because female students are taught in a separate department and access to them can be difficult for a male researcher for cultural reasons.

With regard to the actual data collection, a few dilemmas were encountered, although these were not considered to be of crucial importance. For instance, the teaching sessions were divided into three sessions (an hour each) a week, and this was impossible to change because of conflicts with other modules in the students' schedule. Although many attempts were made to make changes to these sessions with the English department administration and the students themselves, it was impossible. I had hoped that the first two sessions could be merged into one, two-hour session, in which the students would have sufficient time to develop their first drafts and receive PF, and that a second draft which incorporated the comments would be submitted in the following session. Unfortunately, this did not happen.

Another problem encountered was student absenteeism. A few students ($N = 4$) skipped many of the sessions (around two weeks in total for each student), which led to their being excluded from the study. Additionally, when one of the students in a pair skipped the PF session, the other student was affected, in that he then had to wait for someone to

give him PF on his essay. Perhaps this is one of the drawbacks of pair work. Moreover, owing to time restrictions, it was not possible to assess the students' proficiency levels for pairing purposes at the beginning of the data collection periods. Therefore, students' academic records were retrieved and they were classified into different proficiency levels based on their previous results in writing courses and their GPAs. However, this action created a slight problem, with a few cases of students reporting their concern that they had been paired with students of a different proficiency level.

With regard to the design evaluation, the design of the study allowed sufficient data to be gathered for this research. However, it is possible that certain results were affected by the overall design. It was found that the participants reported greater positive change after practice with the conventional PF but less positive change after practice with the new form in areas related to attitudes and motivation. The design of this study could have been a factor that affected the participants' responses. The study was designed in two phases, with one treatment immediately following the other, which may have resulted in a few complications. First, the students' responses in the questionnaires in areas related to, for example, attitudes towards PF, revealed a positive impact from the first treatment. The second treatment was introduced immediately afterwards and the effect reported in the same category was less positive, even though the evidence suggests that this form actually had a more significant effect on writing. What interests me is what would happen if the order of the two treatments were reversed, i.e., if the new form were introduced before the conventional form. Would the students respond in the same way? I still believe that the conventional PF should be introduced first in order to familiarise the participants with the technique, but I also believe that switching the order could yield more evidence on this issue — in that it may allow an investigation of whether or not the first treatment had an effect on the second, and if so, in what way. Additionally, if a study were conducted using two groups of students, with different

designs, i.e., a different order used for each group, comparisons could be made, which may confirm or reject our hypotheses in this regard.

Moreover, the design of the current study could also have been one of the factors that affected the students' preferences for both forms. Various pieces of evidence from this study suggest that the participants have a preference for the conventional PF. It is possible that the fact that they were initially allowed to provide micro PF and then were prohibited from giving it caused a negative reaction towards the new form in terms of their preferences. This is in addition to the fact that their knowledge of FB provision was limited to FB being given on both levels if provided by the same source. In the past their teachers had given FB on both levels (regardless of the emphasis on micro features); then, in this intervention, when practising using the first (conventional) form of PF, their peers also started giving feedback on both levels. It is therefore possible that the fact that they were subsequently forbidden to provide micro PF could have actually reinforced their preference for having PF on both levels. This speculation encourages the need for investigation using the previous suggested design of switching the two treatments.

Additionally, a few complications were encountered owing to a particular aspect of the methodological design of this study: namely, the use of purposive sampling in the interviews. This study used volunteers for the interviews, and although a thorough examination of their responses suggests consistency among the data, they were found to be not representative of the whole sample (they were only representative of their own type, see section 3.8.4). Unfortunately, only those who held positive attitudes and high degrees of motivation stepped up. However, it would not in fact have been possible to obtain a more representative sample, since those students were the only ones who volunteered, and it would not have been ethical to attempt to coerce different types of student to take part in the interviews. The complications were found in investigated

areas such as the change in attitudes after practice with the new form, with the interview findings not matching the questionnaire findings (see RQ 1 & RQ 2). Therefore it is suggested that in future research such a sampling approach for interviews should be adopted with caution, since it may affect the results of the research.

A final point worth mentioning here with regard to the weaknesses of the current research is that it did not utilise a control group. Many researchers argue for the use of a control group when carrying out an empirical study, suggesting that it can increase the validity of the findings, and perhaps allow the findings to be generalised to a larger population. In this study, however, it was not possible to employ a control group, mainly because the students who took part in this study did not have sufficient experience of PF technique before the study was conducted; thus if a control group had been employed, it could have jeopardised the findings of this study. It was thus deemed necessary to familiarise the students with the conventional PF and then introduce the new form (see chapter 3, section 3.7.1 for detailed reasoning in this regard).

On the other hand, the points of strength in this study lie in the fact that it used multiple instruments for data collection, i.e., it used a mixed method approach. The writing tests, for example, made it possible to track the significant improvement in the learners' writing after exposure to each treatment, which was also supported by evidence obtained from other instruments (e.g., interviews). The combining of findings obtained from different sources gives the researcher more confidence in drawing conclusions. Moreover, the documentary evidence utilised in this study helped to explain and confirm other findings. For example, the number of comments used, ignored and rejected was reported in the interviews and in the questionnaires; however, by investigating the related documentary evidence (i.e., the percentages sheets and evaluation forms filled in by the participants), it was possible to confirm the reported

quantities and find an unreported significant increase in the number of comments given during practice with the new form.

Another example of the points of strength in the methodological design of this study is the use of verbal protocol technique, which made it possible to probe deeply into what actually went on when learners were engaged in one-to-one PF encounters, and which provided immediate evidence of the reasons behind certain phenomena. It was found that learners were providing micro PF when they were not supposed to. This finding had the effect of steering the discussion about related sections (e.g., sections in which the effect of traditional teaching methods on learners was discussed). Without the involvement of this data collection tool, it is unlikely that this finding would have been obtained; therefore, researchers are encouraged to consider it where possible in their future research.

For the purposes of this study certain frameworks were selected from other studies to be included in the research design, two of which are seen to be worthy of evaluation here, as they may interest other researchers. The first of these is Min's (2006) four stages of training learners in how to provide PF to their fellow students. This framework was found to regulate the PF process and facilitate the learners' use and understanding of the concept of PF technique itself. It also allows participants to work at a similar pace by completing each stage step by step at the same time, so that proper collaborative work is encouraged. Since it provides the participants with only four clear stages, it is easy to remember and thus less confusion may occur. If it was longer than four stages, participants may form different perceptions regarding, for example, the level of difficulty of the whole process; as a result, their perceptions of the entire PF process could be affected, and the results relating to attitudes and motivation might be different. The participants in this study did not report, nor did the data reveal, evidence of any concern with regard to these four stages. Additionally, I have not come across any study

that has examined them to provide evidence that may or may not support my claims. Therefore, the four stages are recommended for future implementation.

Second, this study used Paulus's (1999) scoring rubrics, which allowed detailed measurement of students' writing. In addition to numerous researchers who have admired these rubrics, the two raters used in the current research became so enamoured of the rubrics that they retained copies for their own use. One of the reasons I was so keen to use them is that the same criteria are embedded in the rubrics as were embedded in the evaluation checklist; therefore, they increased the validity of the data obtained by increasing the content validity of the way they were measured. In this regard, it was these rubrics that allowed us to distinguish between macro and micro features, so that comparisons between macro level features and micro level features were both possible and equivalent (i.e., the six categories were divided into two: three features under 'macro' and three features under 'micro' features). These categories tackled the important features that are likely to concern both teachers and learners.

6.3 Recommendations for the future

Here, a few recommendations are made for teachers and future researchers. Since in this study it was not possible to establish a clear connection between students' preferences for focusing on macro and micro levels and the way they treated the PF they received from their colleagues (see RQ 4.2), it is recommended that researchers investigate this area; this may result in obtaining evidence that could lead to a more robust use of the PF technique. Another area worthy of investigation is the theoretical underpinning behind students' difficulty in changing their perceptions of the new form of PF when they are prevented from commenting on micro features in writing. In this regard, researchers are

also encouraged to investigate the time that might be needed by learners in order for them to change perceptions regarding certain learning styles.

Moreover, it is recommended that researchers thoroughly investigate how introducing the new form of PF affects learners' critical thinking. Some evidence was collected in this study that showed signs of improvement in learners' critical thinking skills; however, this was not sufficient to establish an argument. One possible way of investigating this is by using verbal protocol as one possible tool for data collection. It can be used before and after introducing the new form of PF as a treatment, which should allow comparisons to be made of the different patterns emerging over the recorded sessions and make it possible to identify any changes that occur and the reason for their occurrence. As a researcher and as a practitioner I believe that the new form does have a significant positive impact on learners' critical thinking, even greater than that which results from utilising the conventional form. This conclusion was reached after observing a significant improvement in the students' writing, especially in macro level features, and after observing the improvement in the quality of the peer comments given during practice with the new form of PF, which leads us to an additional area worthy of investigation: that is, whether or not there is a link between learners' critical thinking and the quality of the comments they produce, and whether the production of high quality PF can be used as an indication of how learners can think critically.

Furthermore, I believe that an attempt should be made to investigate the impact of the new form of PF on learners over a longer period of time, without exposing them to the conventional form, and I suggest that the findings of this study should be considered as the starting point for this attempt. In a way, practising the new form over a longer period may uncover the reasons why attitudes and motivation levels did not improve significantly in our study. Researching this area may produce a more in-depth

understanding of the phenomenon and either confirm or reject our hypothesis put forward in the previous chapter.

The effect of the involvement of teacher micro FB was not investigated in this study as it was beyond the scope of the research. It would be interesting to investigate how teacher micro FB affected learners' development in writing, and learners' attitudes and motivation regarding both writing and PF technique. One possible research design would be to utilise two groups: first, a control group to which the new form, as presented in this study, is introduced, and second, an experimental group of students to whom only macro PF is introduced, with no micro FB of any kind. This design should make it possible to investigate the effect of teacher micro FB in the new form by making comparisons between the findings obtained from each group.

Finally, this study used pair work for conducting PF sessions; it might be worth investigating whether there are different effects of using group work as compared to pair work when employing the new form of PF in terms of learners' interaction, effects on writing proficiency, and critical thinking. In this regard I believe that group interaction may produce better outcomes if Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development, which involves having an expert in each group, were taken into account. A point to be mentioned here is that it was not possible to adopt Vygotsky's concept in this study owing to the unavailability of experts and the relatively large number of students, which meant that even if a few experts had been available, they would not have been able to cover all the groups.

With regard to utilising the new form of PF in L2 classrooms, four possible methods are proposed. First, I believe that the introduction of the new form of PF in this research produced remarkable findings, taking into account the key factor that the participants in this study were at an advanced level. Therefore, I would not like to speculate on similar

results occurring if it was introduced to lower level learners, since such learners are likely to be still concerned about building their ‘linguistic micro-structure’. Second, in cases where conventional PF is preferred, I believe it would be useful to divide the PF sessions into two separate sessions: one where macro PF is given, and the second where micro PF is provided. In this way it can be ensured to some extent that the learners will have sufficient time to discuss their essays without worrying about being deprived of the opportunity to give and receive comments on micro writing features. However, teachers also need to consider the fact that this would be likely to consume more class time, and that consequently fewer drafts will be produced. This suggestion was put forward by some of the interviewees in this study. The third suggestion is that the PF technique be used in conjunction with self-assessment technique. This may provide learners with a sense of self-reliance, in case peers are not available to provide help, and this was suggested by one of the interviewees.

Finally, and most importantly, as the new form requires the teacher to provide micro FB for the students, which can be seen as a heavy load for the teacher when the number of students is large, I recommend replacing teacher FB with electronic FB, which can be faster and easily obtained. One example of electronic FB on writing is Criterion, which is an online writing evaluation service that allows users to submit and receive FB at the click of a button. I believe making this substitution could lead to interesting results. It is possible that in such a situation, where PF is implemented in conjunction with Criterion software, for example, learners would be anxious to see more teacher involvement in FB sessions. Even though Criterion may not be perceived as a replacement for teacher FB, it can be used effectively in contexts where teacher FB is scarce — as in the context of this study.

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Appendix I

Interview questions

1- How do you feel about writing? Can you explain why?

ما هو شعورك تجاه الكتابة بالإنجليزية؟ وضح إجابتك.

2- To what extent do you want to learn writing? Can you explain how and give examples?

إلى أي مدى تود تعلم الكتابة؟ وضح إجابتك بإعطاء أمثلة.

3- Do you think your own writing changed as a result of PF? If so, how do you think it changed, and what was it about PF that led to those changes?

هل تعتقد بأن كتابتك تغيرت بسبب استخدام أسلوب تصحيحات وتعليقات الزملاء؟ إذا كان كذلك, كيف تغيرت وما لأسباب التي أدت لهذا التغير؟

4- How do you feel about PF? Can you explain why?

كيف تشعر تجاه أسلوب تصحيحات وتعليقات الزملاء؟ وضح إجابتك.

5- How keen are you to use PF technique in writing classes?

ما مدى حرصك على استخدام أسلوب تصحيحات وتعليقات الزملاء في مادة الكتابة؟

6- What advantages and disadvantages do you think PF has?

ما مميزات وعيوب أسلوب تصحيحات وتعليقات الزملاء؟

7- Do you prefer giving and receiving FB based on *macro & micro* levels? Or just one level? Why?

هل تفضل إعطاء وإستقبال التعليقات والتصحيحات على المستويين (الكلي والجزئي) أم على مستوى واحد فقط؟ ولماذا؟

8- Did you use, ignore or reject any of the received feedback? Why?

هل إستخدمت أو تجاهلت أو رفضت أيًا من تعليقات وتصحيحات الزملاء؟ ولماذا؟

9- Do you have any recommendations for improving the way PF is used?

هل لديك أي توصيات لتطوير استخدام أسلوب تصحيحات وتعليقات الزملاء؟

10- Do you think peer feedback should continue to be used in future classes? Can you explain why?

هل تنصح باستخدام هذا الأسلوب في المستقبل؟ وضح إجابتك.

Appendix II:

Peer Feedback Questionnaire

This questionnaire is being administered by an IPh.D student, who is personally carrying out the study, with the aim of better understanding how peer feedback can be used in an optimal way in the Saudi context. The questionnaire consists of two sections. After answering the first part the researcher will provide further explanation on how the study will be carried out. Your queries will be answered then. This is not a test so there are no “right” or “wrong” answers. The results of this questionnaire will be used only for research purposes so please give your answers sincerely. Thank you very much for your help!

Keyword explanations:

- Macro level: *how clearly and interestingly written the essay is. For example, 1) Organisation: are the ideas easy to follow? Does one idea follow logically from the next? 2) Coherence: is each paragraph related to the topic. Does the essay use cohesive ties (although, moreover, in addition... etc.) to link ideas and paragraphs together? Are these ties used appropriately?*
- Micro Level: *e.g. grammar, punctuation, vocabulary... etc.*

Section 1: General Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions based on your previous experience by circling one of the given answers:

- 1- Do you feel your English classes are taught in a way that **encourages** your interest?
1) Yes 2) No
- 2- Would you like to see more student **involvement** in writing classes?
1) Yes 2) No
- 3- Do you **know** what peer feedback is?
1) Yes 2) No
- 4- Have you **used** peer feedback before?
1) Yes 2) No
 - If yes, did you find peer feedback **interesting**?
 1) Yes 2) No
- 5- How interested are you to **receive** comments on your essays from your colleagues?
 Not interested 1 2 3 4 5 Interested

Section 2: Peer Feedback

Please mark the boxes that best describe your feeling about the corresponding statement.

Part I) Attitudes	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1- I find writing interesting .					
2- I find practice in writing useful .					
3- I find writing difficult .					
4- Using peer feedback technique in writing is interesting .					
5- Using peer feedback in learning is boring .					
6- Peer feedback is reliable as a source of information.					
7- Reading my classmates' essays is useless .					
8- Reading my classmates' comments is useful and beneficial .					
9- Peer feedback is a useful technique for improving writing skills.					
10- I hope my English teacher will avoid this technique to teach writing next semester.					
11- I do my best to give helpful feedback to my colleagues.					
12- I recommend peer feedback for future classes.					
Part II) Motivation	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
13- I have a very strong desire to learn writing.					
14- I doubt that I will push myself to learn writing.					
15- I am prepared to expend a lot of effort in learning composition.					
16- It is worthless for me to learn how to use peer feedback.					
17- I always think over what we learn in peer feedback sessions.					
18- If peer feedback were used outside the class, I would try to participate in it.					
19- During peer feedback activities, I work very carefully and try to make sure I understand everything.					
20- I have a very weak desire to use peer feedback in writing.					
21- Using peer feedback is a meaningless technique in developing my composition skills.					
22- I am willing to work hard at using peer feedback in composition.					
23- If peer feedback sessions were offered in the future, I would like to take them.					
Part III) Preferences from macro and micro level	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree

24- I appreciate the way that my classmates give me written comments on my essays.					
25- When my colleague gives me feedback, I want to see comments indicating errors in spelling and vocabulary.					
26- When my colleague gives me feedback, I object to seeing comments indicating errors in grammar and punctuation.					
27- When my colleague gives me feedback, I want to see comments on the organisation of my essay.					
28- When my colleague gives me feedback, I object to seeing comments on the ideas I expressed.					
29- I prefer focusing only on macro issues when giving and receiving peer feedback.					
30- I prefer focusing on both macro and micro issues when giving and receiving peer feedback.					
31- Focusing on one level of issues when giving and receiving peer feedback discourages participation in peer feedback.					
Part IV) Effects on writing	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
32- Reading my classmates' essays helps me to improve the organisation of my composition.					
33- My essays improve after revisions.					
34- My classmates' comments in peer response sessions make the organisation of my composition worse .					
35- After each revision, the organisation of my essay becomes better .					
36- My writing quality will deteriorate because of peer feedback.					
37- I felt that I was critical of others when commenting on peers' work.					
Part V) Learners' acceptance of peer feedback	None	Little	Some	A lot	
38- How much peer feedback did you use ?					
39- How much peer feedback did you reject ?					
40- How much peer feedback did you ignore ?					

Please add any comments:

(The end)

Appendix III:

Questionnaire Arabic version

استبانة تعليقات وتصحيحات الزملاء

قُدمت هذه الاستبانة للقيام ببحث درجة الدكتوراة من قبل الباحث الذي سيقوم بجمع هذه المعلومات. وتهدف الدراسة إلى معرفة كيفية الاستفادة من أسلوب تعليقات وتصحيحات الزملاء بأفضل طريقة في المناخ التعليمي السعودي. وتتألف من قسمين. سيقوم الباحث بعد الانتهاء من القسم الأول بشرح كيفية الدراسة والإجراءات المتعلقة بها. جميع استفساراتكم سيتم الإجابة عنها بعد ذلك هذه الاستبانة ليست اختباراً لذلك لا توجد إجابات "صحيحة" أو "خاطئة". نتائج هذه الاستبانة لن تستخدم إلا لأغراض البحث لذا نرجو الإجابة عليها بمصادقية تامة. ونقدر لكم تعاونكم .

شرح الكلمات الدلالية:

المستوى الكلي للمقالة: درجة وضوح وتشويق المقالة. على سبيل المثال: أ) **التنظيم:** سهولة تتبع الأفكار, منطقية الأفكار وتسلسلها. ب) **الترباط:** هل جميع القطع الإنشائية مرتبطة بالفكرة الرئيسية؟ هل تم استخدام أدوات الربط (Although, In addition, Moreover...etc.) لربط الأفكار والقطع مع بعضها البعض؟ هل أدوات الربط هذه مستخدمة بشكل مناسب؟
المستوى الجزئي للمقالة: مثال: القواعد, أدوات الترقيم, المفردات.

القسم الأول: أسئلة عامة

الرجاء الإجابة على الأسئلة التالية بناء على خبراتك السابقة وذلك بوضع دائرة حول إحدى الإجابات المعطاة:

- 1 هل تشعر بأن فصول كتابة اللغة الإنجليزية تدرس بطريقة مشجعة لاهتمامك؟
(1) نعم (ب) لا
- 2 هل ترغب بمشاركة أكثر للطالب في مواد الكتابة الإنجليزية؟
(1) نعم (ب) لا
- 3 هل تعرف ما هو أسلوب تعليقات وتصحيحات الزملاء؟
(1) نعم (ب) لا
- 4 هل سبق وأن استخدمت أسلوب تعليقات وتصحيحات الزملاء؟
(1) نعم (ب) لا
- 5 ما مدى اهتمامك بالحصول على تعليقات وتصحيحات من زملائك على مقالاتك الإنشائية؟
(1) غير مهم 1 2 3 4 5 مهم

القسم الثاني: تعليقات وتصحيحات الزملاء

الرجاء وضع علامة أمام المكان المتوافق مع إجابتك بناءً على شعورك تجاه الجملة المقابلة.

الجزء الأول) الشعور تجاه تعليقات وتصحيحات الزملاء					
أوافق وبشدة	أوافق	لست متأكد	لا أوافق وبشدة	لا أوافق وبشدة	
					1 أرى بأن الكتابة في اللغة الإنجليزية مثيرة للاهتمام.
					2 أرى بأن الممارسة في الكتابة مفيدة.
					3 أرى بأن الكتابة في اللغة الإنجليزية صعبة.
					4 استخدام أسلوب تعليقات وتصحيحات الزملاء في الكتابة مثير للإهتمام.
					5 استخدام أسلوب تعليقات وتصحيحات الزملاء في التعلم شي ممل.
					6 تعليقات وتصحيحات الزملاء تعتبر موثوقة كمصدر للمعلومات.
					7 قراءة مقالات زملائي غير مفيدة.
					8 قراءة تعليقات وتصحيحات زملائي نافعة ومساعدة.
					9 أسلوب تعليقات وتصحيحات الزملاء يعتبر مفيد لتطوير مهارات الكتابة.
					10 أتمنى من مدرس المادة تجنب استخدام هذا الأسلوب في تدريس الكتابة الفصل القادم.
					11 أفعل ما بوسعي لإعطاء تعليقات وتصحيحات مفيدة لزملائي.
					12 انصح باستخدام أسلوب تعليقات وتصحيحات الزملاء في الفصول القادمة.
الجزء الثاني) الدافعية والحافزية					
أوافق وبشدة	أوافق	لست متأكد	لا أوافق وبشدة	لا أوافق وبشدة	
					13 لدي رغبة قوية لتعلم الكتابة.
					14 أشك بأنني سأضغط على نفسي لأجل تعلم الكتابة.
					15 انا مستعد لبذل جهد كبير لأجل تعلم الكتابة.
					16 يعتبر استخدام أسلوب تعليقات وتصحيحات الزملاء عديم القيمة.
					17 دائماً أفكر بما تعلمناه في جلسات أسلوب تعليقات وتصحيحات الزملاء.
					18 لو قُدمت جلسات تستخدم تعليقات وتصحيحات الزملاء خارج القاعة، سأحاول المشاركة بها.
					19 خلال أنشطة تعليقات وتصحيحات الزملاء انا أعمل بانتباه شديد واحاول فهم كل شيء.
					20 لدي رغبة ضعيفة جداً لاستخدام أسلوب تعليقات وتصحيحات الزملاء في مادة الكتابة.
					21 استخدام أسلوب تعليقات وتصحيحات الزملاء ليس له معنى من أجل تطوير مهارة الكتابة.
					22 انا مستعد للعمل بجد باستخدام أسلوب تعليقات وتصحيحات الزملاء من أجل تطوير مهارة الكتابة.
					23 لو قدم أسلوب تعليقات وتصحيحات الزملاء في المستقبل، فإني أود المشاركة.
الجزء الثالث) التفضيلات بين المستويين الكلي والجزئي للمقالة					
أوافق وبشدة	أوافق	لست متأكد	لا أوافق وبشدة	لا أوافق وبشدة	
					24 أنا أقدر الطريقة التي يقوم بها زملائي بإعطائي ملاحظاتهم وتعليقاتهم على مقالاتي.
					25 عندما يعطيني زميلي ملاحظات وتعليقات، أريدها ان تشير إلى أخطائي في التهجئة والمفردات.
					26 عندما يعطيني زميلي ملاحظات وتعليقات، أعترض على استقبال ملاحظات وتصحيحات في علامات الترقيم

					والقواعد.
					27 عندما يعطيني زميلي ملاحظات وتعليقات، أريدها ان تكون على تنظيم مقالتي.
					28 عندما يعطيني زميلي ملاحظات وتعليقات، أعترض على استقبال ملاحظات وتصحيحات في الأفكار التي كتبتها.
					29 أفضل التركيز على المستوى الكلي للمقالة فقط عند إعطاء وإستقبال الملاحظات والتصحيحات.
					30 أفضل التركيز على كلا المستويين الكلي والجزئي عند إعطاء وإستقبال الملاحظات والتصحيحات.
					31 التركيز على مستوى واحد عند إعطاء وإستقبال الملاحظات والتصحيحات يشبط العزيمة عن المشاركة في هذا الأسلوب.
أوافق وبشدة	أوافق	لست متأكد	لا أوافق	لا أوافق وبشدة	الجزء الرابع) التأثير على الكتابة
					32 قراءة مقالات زملائي تساعدني على تطوير تنظيم مقالتي.
					33 تتطور مقالاتي بعد مراجعات تعليقات وتصحيحات الزملاء.
					34 تعليقات وتصحيحات الزملاء جعلت تنظيم مقالاتي أسوأ من ذي قبل.
					35 بعد كل مراجعة لتعليقات زملائي، ألاحظ أن تنظيم مقالتي تتحسن.
					36 جودة كتابتي ستتدهور بسبب استخدام أسلوب تعليقات وتصحيحات الزملاء
					37 أشعر بأني بارع في نقد مقالات زملائي.
الكثير	البعض	القليل	لا شيء		الجزء الخامس) قبول تعليقات وتصحيحات الزملاء
					38 ماهي كمية تعليقات وتصحيحات الزملاء التي استخدمتها؟
					39 ماهي كمية تعليقات وتصحيحات الزملاء التي رفضتها؟
					40 ماهي كمية تعليقات وتصحيحات الزملاء التي تجاهلتها؟

أسعد بملاحظاتك الأخرى:

Appendix IV

Evaluation checklist. (Al-Hazmi & Schofield, 2006)

<i>Global level features</i>	Writing features	Comments
	1. Main idea: What is the overall idea?	
	2. Purpose 2.1 Is the primary purpose clear? Is the purpose to: Inform? Persuade? Or both?	
	3. Content 3.1 Did the writer give enough about the topic adequately? 3.2 Is all the information relevant to the topic? 3.3 Are the main ideas supported by specific examples or evidence? 3.4 Are there gaps in the information? 3.5 Is there too much information on some points?	

	<p>4. Structure of text</p> <p>4.1 Does the essay have a clear introduction and a clear conclusion?</p> <p>4.2 Is the sequence of the ideas clear - earlier to later, general to particular, thesis to supporting points, supporting points to conclusion, weaker arguments to stronger arguments? If not would it help to rearrange the order of ideas?</p> <p>4.3 Paragraphs</p> <p>a. Does the essay have clear paragraph divisions?</p> <p>b. Is each paragraph built around one main idea?</p> <p>c. Do paragraph divisions match the organisation of ideas in the plan?</p> <p>d. If not, should any of the paragraphs be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • joined together? • divided into smaller units? • rearranged? 	
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features	Local level	<p>5. a. Cohesion</p> <p>5.1 Do the connections between the ideas need to be made clear or explicit?</p> <p>5.2 If connecting words like the ones below have been used, have they been used appropriately?</p> <p>5.3 Do they give the reader a sense of flow in your ideas? Or do the ideas simply read like a list?</p> <p><u>Types of connectors</u></p> <p>'And' type: <i>therefore, as a result, accordingly, consequently, thus</i></p> <p>'Or' type: <i>in other words, to put it more simply</i></p> <p>'But' type: <i>however, yet, nevertheless</i></p> <p><u>Other connectors include:</u> <i>who, which, that, when, where, because, since, although, etc.</i></p>	
		<p>5. b. Response as readers</p> <p>5.1 Does the opening paragraph make the reader want to read on?</p> <p>5.2 Do you feel satisfied with the way the essay comes to an end?</p>	
		<p>6. Vocabulary</p> <p>Is specialist or technical and general vocabulary accurately used?</p>	

	<p>7. Grammar</p> <p>Do subjects and verbs agree? Are verb tenses correctly formed and correctly used? Check the correct use of prepositions, articles, adjectives, passive forms.</p>	
	<p>8. Mechanical accuracy</p> <p>8.1 Punctuation: Does each sentence end with an appropriate mark of punctuation?</p> <p>8.2 Capital letters: Are capital letters used where they are needed?</p> <p>8.3 Spelling: Check your spelling of words that you are not sure about in a dictionary, or use the spelling checker if you are working on a word processor.</p>	

Appendix V

Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE



**School of Education,
Communication and Language
Sciences**

The researcher who will be conducting this study has explained its purpose and promised that participants' identities will not be revealed or used in the research. If you are still happy to participate, please sign this form.

Name:

Date:

Signature:

Appendix VI

Essay Scoring Rubric by Paulus (1999)

	Organization/Unity	Development	Cohesion/coherence	Structure	Vocabulary	Mechanics
1	No organization evident; ideas random, related to each other but not to task; no paragraphing; no thesis; no unity	No development	Not coherent; no relationship of ideas evident	Attempted simple sentences; serious, recurring, unsystematic grammatical errors obliterate meaning; non-English patterns predominate	Meaning obliterated; extremely limited range; incorrect/unsystematic inflectional, derivational morpheme use; little to no knowledge of appropriate word use regarding meaning and syntax	Little or no command of spelling, punctuation, paragraphing, capitalization
2	Suggestion of organization; no clear thesis; ideas listed or numbered, often not in sentence form; no paragraphing/grouping; no unity	Development severely limited; examples random, if given.	Not coherent; ideas random/unconnected; attempt at transitions may be present, but ineffective; few or unclear referential ties; reader is lost.	Uses simple sentences; some attempts at various verb tenses; serious unsystematic errors, occasional clarity; possibly uses coordination; meaning often obliterated; unsuccessful attempts at embedding may be evident	Meaning severely inhibited; very limited range; relies on repetition of common words; inflectional/ derivational morphemes incorrect, unsystematic; very limited command of common words; seldom idiomatic; reader greatly distracted	Some evidence of command of basic mechanical features; error-ridden and unsystematic
3	Some organization; relationship between ideas not evident; attempted thesis, but unclear; no	Lacks content at abstract and concrete levels; few	Partially coherent; attempt at relationship, relevancy and progression of some ideas, but inconsistent or	Meaning not impeded by use of simple sentences, despite errors; attempts at complicated sentences inhibit	Meaning inhibited; limited range; some patterns of errors may be evident; limited command of usage; much	Evidence of developing command of basic mechanical

	paragraphing/ grouping; no hierarchy of ideas; suggestion of unity of ideas	examples	ineffective; limited use of transitions; relationship within and between ideas unclear/non-existent; may occasionally use appropriate simple referential ties such as coordinating conjunctions	meaning; possibly uses coordination successfully; embedding may be evident; non-English patterns evident; non-parallel and inconsistent structures	repetition; reader distracted at times	features; frequent, unsystematic errors
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	Organization/Unity	Development	Cohesion/coherence	Structure	Vocabulary	Mechanics
4	Organization present; ideas show grouping; may have general thesis, though not for persuasion; beginning of hierarchy of ideas; lacks overall persuasive focus and unity	Underdeveloped; lacks concreteness; examples may be inappropriate, too general; may use main points as support for each other	Partially coherent, main purpose somewhat clear to reader; relationship, relevancy, and progression of ideas may be apparent; may begin to use logical connectors between/within ideas/paragraphs effectively; relationship between/within ideas not evident; personal pronoun references exist, may be clear, but lacks command of demonstrative pronouns and other referential ties; repetition of key vocabulary not used successfully	Relies on simple structures; limited command of morpho-syntactic system; attempts at embedding may be evident in simple structures without consistent success; non-English patterns evident	Meaning inhibited by somewhat limited range and variety; often uses inappropriately informal lexical items; systematic errors in morpheme usage; somewhat limited command of word usage; occasionally idiomatic; frequent use of circumlocution; reader distracted	May have paragraph format; some systematic errors in spelling, capitalization, basic punctuation
5	Possible attempted introduction, body, conclusion; obvious, general thesis with some attempt to follow it; ideas grouped appropriately; some persuasive focus, unclear at times; hierarchy of ideas may exist, without reflecting importance; some unity	Underdeveloped; some sections may have concreteness; some may be supported while others are not; some examples may be appropriate supporting evidence for a persuasive essay, others may be logical fallacies, unsupported generalizations	Partially coherent; shows attempt to relate ideas, still ineffective at times; some effective use of logical connectors between/within groups of ideas/paragraphs; command of personal pronoun reference; partial command of demonstratives, deictics, determiners	Systematic consistent grammatical errors; some successful attempts at complex structures, but limited variety; clause construction occasionally successful, meaning occasionally disrupted by use of complex or non-English patterns; some non-parallel, inconsistent structures	Meaning occasionally inhibited; some range and variety; morpheme usage generally under control; command awkward or uneven; sometimes informal, unidiomatic, distracting; some use of circumlocution	Paragraph format evident; basic punctuation, simple spelling, capitalization, formatting under control; systematic errors

	Organization/Unity	Development	Cohesion/coherence	Structure	Vocabulary	Mechanics
6	Clear introduction, body, conclusion; beginning control over essay format, focused topic sentences; narrowed thesis approaching position statement; some supporting evidence, yet ineffective at times; hierarchy of ideas present without always reflecting idea importance; may digress from topic	Partially underdeveloped, concreteness present, but inconsistent; logic flaws may be evident; some supporting proof and evidence used to develop thesis; some sections still undersupported and generalized; repetitive	Basically coherent in purpose and focus; mostly effective use of logical connectors, used to progress ideas; pronoun references mostly clear; referential/anaphoric reference may be present; command of demonstratives; beginning appropriate use of transitions	Some variety of complex structures evident, limited pattern of error; meaning usually clear; clause construction and placement somewhat under control; finer distinction in morpho-syntactic system evident; non-English patterns may occasionally inhibit meaning	Meaning seldom inhibited; adequate range, variety; appropriately academic, formal in lexical choices; successfully avoids the first person; infrequent errors in morpheme usage; beginning to use some idiomatic expressions successfully; general command of usage; rarely distracting	Basic mechanics under control; sometimes successful attempts at sophistication, such as semi-colons, colons
7	Essay format under control; appropriate paragraphing and topic sentences; hierarchy of ideas present; main points include persuasive evidence; position statement/thesis narrowed and directs essay; may occasionally digress from topic; basically unified; follows standard persuasive organizational patterns	Acceptable level of development; concreteness present and somewhat consistent; logic evident, makes sense, mostly adequate supporting proof; may be repetitive	Mostly coherent in persuasive focus and purpose, progression of ideas facilitates reader understanding; successful attempts to use logical connectors, lexical repetition, synonyms, collocation; cohesive devices may still be inconsistent/ ineffective at times; may show creativity; possibly still some irrelevancy	Meaning generally clear; increasing distinctions in morpho-syntactic system; sentence variety evident; frequent successful attempts at complex structures; non-English patterns do not inhibit meaning; parallel and consistent structures used	Meaning not inhibited; adequate range, variety; basically idiomatic; infrequent errors in usage; some attention to style; mistakes rarely distracting; little use of circumlocution	Occasional mistakes in basic mechanics; increasingly successful attempts at sophisticated punctuation; may have systematic spelling errors

	Organization/Unity	Development	Cohesion/coherence	Structure	Vocabulary	Mechanics
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8	Definite control of organization; may show some creativity; may attempt implied thesis; content clearly relevant, convincing; unified; sophisticated; uses organizational control to further express ideas; conclusion may serve specific function	Each point clearly developed with a variety of convincing types of supporting evidence; ideas supported effectively; may show originality in presentation of support; clear logical and persuasive/convincing progression of ideas	Coherent; clear persuasive purpose and focus; ideas relevant to topic; consistency and sophistication in use of transitions/ referential ties; effective use of lexical repetition, derivations, synonyms; transitional devices appropriate/ effective; cohesive devices used to further the progression of ideas in a manner clearly relevant to the overall meaning	Manipulates syntax with attention to style; generally error-free sentence variety; meaning clear; non-English patterns rarely evident	Meaning clear; fairly sophisticated range and variety; word usage under control; occasionally unidiomatic; attempts at original, appropriate choices; may use some language nuance	Uses mechanical devices to further meaning; generally error-free
9	Highly effective organizational pattern for convincing, persuasive essay; unified with clear position statement; content relevant and effective	Well-developed with concrete, logical, appropriate supporting examples, evidence and details; highly effective/ convincing; possibly creative use of support	Coherent and convincing to reader; uses transitional devices/referential ties/logical connectors to create and further a particular style	Mostly error-free; frequent success in using language to stylistic advantage; idiomatic syntax; non-English patterns not evident	Meaning clear; sophisticated range, variety; often idiomatic; often original, appropriate choices; may have distinctions in nuance for accuracy, clarity	Uses mechanical devices for stylistic purposes; may be error-free
10	Appropriate native-like standard written English	Appropriate native-like standard written English	Appropriate native-like standard written English	Appropriate native-like standard written English	Appropriate native-like standard written English	Appropriate native-like standard written English

Appendix VII

Tables of Chapter Four

Table 4.1: Paired Samples Statistics (Linguistic Progress)

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	pretest	3.4309	41	1.15363	.18017
	midtest	4.5285	41	.98665	.15409
Pair 2	midtest	4.5285	41	.98665	.15409
	posttest	6.1484	41	1.21771	.19017
Pair 3	DIFF1	-1.0976	41	.62581	.09773
	DIFF2	-1.6199	41	.85087	.13288

Table 4.2: Paired Samples Test (Linguistic Progress)

		Paired Differences							
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	pretest - midtest	-1.09756	.62581	.09773	-1.29509	-.90003	-11.230	40	.000
Pair 2	midtest - posttest	-1.61992	.85087	.13288	-1.88849	-1.35135	-12.191	40	.000
Pair 3	DIFF1 - DIFF2	.52236	1.20157	.18765	.14310	.90162	2.784	40	.008

Table 4.3: Paired Samples Statistics (effects on writing features: macro & micro)

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	PRE_Organisation	3.5244	41	1.31316	.20508

	MID_Organisation	4.8537	41	1.02007	.15931
Pair 2	MID_Organisation	4.8537	41	1.02007	.15931
	POST_Organisation	6.5122	41	1.27714	.19946
Pair 3	diff1Organisation	-1.3293-	41	.85593	.13367
	diff2Organisation	-1.6585-	41	.83246	.13001
Pair 4	PRE_Development	3.4024	41	1.17909	.18414
	MID_Development	4.5488	41	.99250	.15500
Pair 5	MID_Development	4.5488	41	.99250	.15500
	POST_Development	6.3415	41	1.26214	.19711
Pair 6	diff1Development	-1.1463-	41	.91681	.14318
	diff2Development	-1.7927-	41	1.02455	.16001
Pair 7	PRE_Cohesion	3.2805	41	1.28476	.20065
	MID_Cohesion	4.4756	41	1.26467	.19751
Pair 8	MID_Cohesion	4.4756	41	1.26467	.19751
	POST_Cohesion	6.4024	41	1.21047	.18904
Pair 9	diff1Cohesion	-1.1951-	41	.98665	.15409
	diff2Cohesion	-1.9268-	41	1.06396	.16616
Pair 10	Pre_Structure	3.2805	41	1.40111	.21882
	Mid_Structure	4.1341	41	1.11817	.17463
Pair 11	Mid_Structure	4.1341	41	1.11817	.17463
	Post_Structure	5.6707	41	1.48581	.23204
Pair 12	diff1Structure	-.8537-	41	.88207	.13776
	diff2Structure	-1.5366-	41	1.18528	.18511
Pair 13	Pre_Vocabulary	3.2683	41	1.22013	.19055
	Mid_Vocabulary	4.3902	41	1.09836	.17154
Pair 14	Mid_Vocabulary	4.3902	41	1.09836	.17154
	Post_Vocabulary	5.9024	41	1.30489	.20379
Pair 15	diff1Vocabulary	-1.1220-	41	.79672	.12443
	diff2Vocabulary	-1.5122-	41	1.02767	.16049
Pair 16	Pre_Mechanics	3.8293	41	1.23293	.19255
	Mid_Mechanics	4.7683	41	.96888	.15131
Pair 17	Mid_Mechanics	4.7683	41	.96888	.15131
	Post_Mechanics	6.0610	41	1.36563	.21328
Pair 18	diff1Mechanics	-.9390-	41	.80774	.12615
	diff2Mechanics	-1.2927-	41	1.01843	.15905

Table 4.4: Paired Samples Test (effects on writing features: macro & micro)

		Paired Differences							
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	PRE_Organisation - MID_Organisation	1.32927	.85593	.13367	-1.59943	-1.05910	-9.944	40	.000
Pair 2	MID_Organisation - POST_Organisation	1.65854	.83246	.13001	-1.92129	-1.39578	-12.757	40	.000
Pair 3	diff1Organisation - diff2Organisation	.32927	1.27284	.19878	-.07249	.73103	1.656	40	.105
Pair 4	PRE_Development - MID_Development	1.14634	.91681	.14318	-1.43572	-.85696	-8.006	40	.000
Pair 5	MID_Development - POST_Development	1.79268	1.02455	.16001	-2.11607	-1.46930	-11.204	40	.000
Pair 6	diff1Development - diff2Development	.64634	1.55822	.24335	.15451	1.13818	2.656	40	.011
Pair 7	PRE_Cohesion - MID_Cohesion	1.19512	.98665	.15409	-1.50655	-.88370	-7.756	40	.000
Pair 8	MID_Cohesion - POST_Cohesion	1.92683	1.06396	.16616	-2.26266	-1.59100	-11.596	40	.000
Pair 9	diff1Cohesion - diff2Cohesion	.73171	1.69962	.26544	.19524	1.26817	2.757	40	.009
Pair 10	Pre_Structure - Mid_Structure	1.53659	.85366	.13776	-1.13207	-.57524	-6.197	40	.000
Pair 11	Mid_Structure - Post_Structure	1.53659	1.18528	.18511	-1.91070	-1.16247	-8.301	40	.000
Pair 12	diff1Structure - diff2Structure	.68293	1.69468	.26467	.14802	1.21783	2.580	40	.014
Pair 13	Pre_Vocabulary - Mid_Vocabulary	1.12195	.79672	.12443	-1.37343	-.87048	-9.017	40	.000
Pair 14	Mid_Vocabulary - Post_Vocabulary	1.51220	1.02767	.16049	-1.83657	-1.18782	-9.422	40	.000
Pair 15	diff1Vocabulary - diff2Vocabulary	.39024	1.55930	.24352	-.10193	.88242	1.603	40	.117
Pair 16	Pre_Mechanics - Mid_Mechanics	1.93902	.80774	.12615	-1.19398	-.68407	-7.444	40	.000

Pair 17	Mid_Mechanics - Post_Mechanics	-1.29268	1.01843	.15905	-1.61414	-.97123	-8.127	40	.000
Pair 18	diff1Mechanics - diff2Mechanics	.35366	1.33811	.20898	-.06870	.77602	1.692	40	.098

Table 4.5: Paired Samples Statistics (comparison of development in macro and micro features)

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	PreMicrofeatures	3.4593	41	1.22008	.19054
	PreMacrofeatures	3.4024	41	1.16068	.18127
Pair 2	MidMicrofeatures	4.4309	41	.98811	.15432
	MidMacrofeatures	4.6260	41	1.03265	.16127
Pair 3	PostMicrofeatures	5.8780	41	1.30119	.20321
	PostMacrofeatures	6.4187	41	1.18035	.18434

Table 4.6: Paired Samples Test (comparison of development in macro and micro features)

		Paired Differences							
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	PreMicrofeatures - PreMacrofeatures	.05691	.58997	.09214	-.12931	.24313	.618	40	.540
Pair 2	MidMicrofeatures - MidMacrofeatures	-.19512	.43764	.06835	-.33326	-.05698	-2.855	40	.007
Pair 3	PostMicrofeatures - PostMacrofeatures	-.54065	.49129	.07673	-.69572	-.38558	-7.047	40	.000

Table 4.7: Descriptive Statistics (attitudes & motivation to learn writing)

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
PREattitudesInwriting	41	3.8699	.53685	2.33	4.67

MIDattitudesInwriting	41	4.0081	.49715	3.00	5.00
PREmotivationWriting	41	3.7783	.48958	2.55	4.64
MIDmotivationWriting	41	3.9002	.53698	2.73	4.91
POSTattitudesInwriting	41	4.0976	.54387	3.00	5.00
POSTmotivationWriting	41	3.9424	.52095	2.27	4.82

Table 4.8: Test Statistics^b (attitudes & motivation to learn writing)

	MIDattitudesInwriting - PREattitudesInwriting	POSTattitudesInwriting - MIDattitudesInwriting	POSTattitudesInwriting - PREattitudesInwriting	MIDmotivationWriting - PREmotivationWriting	POSTmotivation - MIDmotivation'
Z	-1.837 ^a	-1.149 ^a	-2.335 ^a	-2.264 ^a	
Asymp. Sig. (2- tailed)	.066	.250	.020	.024	

a. Based on negative ranks.

b. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

Table 4.9: Descriptive Statistics (attitudes and motivation with regard to PF)

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Pre_PF_attitiudes	41	3.8803	.48551	2.82	4.82
Mid_PF_attitiudes	41	4.0200	.56973	2.45	4.91
PreMotivationPF	41	3.7783	.48958	2.55	4.64
MidMotivationPF	41	3.9002	.53698	2.73	4.91
Post_PF_attitiudes	41	4.0355	.54351	2.55	4.91
PostMotivationPF	41	3.9424	.52095	2.27	4.82

Table 4.10: Test Statistics^c (attitudes & motivation regarding PF)

	Mid_PF_attitudes - Pre_PF_attitudes	Post_PF_attitudes - Mid_PF_attitudes	Post_PF_attitudes - Pre_PF_attitudes	MidMotivationPF - PreMotivationPF	PostMotivationPF - MidMotivationPF	PostMotivationPF - PreMotivationPF
Z	-1.987 ^a	-.239 ^b	-1.390 ^a	-2.264 ^a	-.309 ^a	-2.27
Asymp. Sig. (2- tailed)	.047	.811	.165	.024	.758	.0

a. Based on negative ranks.

b. Based on positive ranks.

c. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

Table 4.9a: Descriptive Statistics (reliability of PF)

	PRE_peer feedback is reliable as a source of information.	MID_peer feedback is reliable as a source of information.	POST_peer feedback is reliable as a source of information.
N Valid	41	41	41
Missing	3	3	3
Mean	2.8293	2.8537	2.7561
Std. Deviation	.99756	1.10817	.96903

Table 4.10a: Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test (Pre & mid reliability of PF)

Hypothesis Test Summary

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The median of differences between peer feedback is reliable as a source of information, and peer feedback is reliable as a source of information, equals 0.	Related-Samples Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test	.833	Retain the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

Table 4.10b: Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test (Pre & mid reliability of PF)

Hypothesis Test Summary

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The median of differences between peer feedback is reliable as a source of information, and peer feedback is reliable as a source of information, equals 0.	Related-Samples Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test	.624	Retain the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

Table 4.11: Descriptive Statistics (using, ignoring and rejecting the received PF)

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Pre_how much peer feedback did you use?	41	2.5610	.97593	.00	4.00
Mid_how much peer feedback did you use?	41	3.2195	.79095	2.00	4.00
Pre_how much peer feedback did you reject?	41	1.9024	.91665	.00	4.00
Mid_how much peer feedback did you reject?	41	1.9512	.77302	1.00	4.00
Pre_how much peer feedback did you ignore?	41	1.6098	.73750	.00	4.00
Mid_how much peer feedback did you ignore?	41	1.8780	.71397	1.00	4.00
Post_how much peer feedback did you use?	41	3.4146	.77381	2.00	4.00
Post_how much peer feedback did you reject?	41	2.0976	.70017	1.00	4.00
Post_how much peer feedback did you ignore?	41	2.0244	.82121	1.00	4.00

Table 4.12: Test Statistics^b (using, ignoring and rejecting the received PF)

	Mid_how much peer feedback did you use? -	Post_how much peer feedback did you use? -	Post_how much peer feedback did you use? -	Mid_how much peer feedback did you reject? -	Post_how much peer feedback did you reject? -	Post_how much peer feedback did you reject? -	Mid_how much peer feedback did you ignore? -	Post_how much peer feedback did you ignore? -	Post_how much peer feedback did you ignore? -
	Pre_how much peer feedback did you use?	Mid_how much peer feedback did you use?	Pre_how much peer feedback did you use?	Pre_how much peer feedback did you reject?	Mid_how much peer feedback did you reject?	Pre_how much peer feedback did you reject?	Pre_how much peer feedback did you ignore?	Mid_how much peer feedback did you ignore?	Pre_how much peer feedback did you ignore?
Z	-3.075 ^a	-1.660 ^a	-3.835 ^a	-.182 ^a	-1.414 ^a	-1.095 ^a	-1.873 ^a	-1.079 ^a	-2.557 ^a
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.097	.000	.856	.157	.274	.061	.280	.011

a. Based on negative ranks.

b. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

Table 4.13: Descriptive Statistics (preferences for micro and macro levels)

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
PreRCMicroFB	41	3.9634	.69273	2.00	5.00
MidRCMicroFB	41	4.0244	.62201	2.50	5.00
PreRCMacroFB	41	3.6463	.67309	2.00	5.00
MidRCMacroFB	41	3.8049	.54633	2.50	5.00
PostRCMicroFB	41	3.9512	.67828	2.00	5.00
PostRCMacroFB	41	3.9634	.64605	2.50	5.00

Table 4.14a: Test Statistics^c (preferences for micro and macro levels)

	MidRCMicroFB - PreRCMicroFB	PostRCMicroFB - MidRCMicroFB	MidRCMacroFB - PreRCMacroFB	PostRCMacroFB - MidRCMacroFB
Z	-.293 ^a	-.833 ^b	-1.099 ^a	-1.528 ^a
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.770	.405	.272	.127

a. Based on negative ranks.

b. Based on positive ranks.

c. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

Table 4.14b: Test Statistics^c (preferences for micro and macro levels)

	PostRCMicroFB - PreRCMicroFB	PostRCMacroFB - PreRCMacroFB
Z	-.372 ^a	-1.997 ^b
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.710	.046

a. Based on positive ranks.

b. Based on negative ranks.

c. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

Table 4.15: Descriptive Statistics (preferences for one or two levels)

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Pre_i prefer focusing on macro issues when giving and receiving peer feedback.	41	2.7317	1.04939	1.00	5.00
Mid_i prefer focusing on macro issues when giving and receiving peer feedback.	41	2.6341	1.01873	1.00	5.00
Pre_i prefer focusing on both macro and micro issues when giving and receiving peer feedback.	41	4.2195	.79095	2.00	5.00
Mid_i prefer focusing on both macro and micro issues when giving and receiving peer feedback.	41	4.2195	.65239	2.00	5.00
Post_i prefer focusing on macro issues when giving and receiving peer feedback.	41	2.7073	.84392	1.00	4.00

Table 4.15: Descriptive Statistics (preferences for one or two levels)

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Pre_i prefer focusing on macro issues when giving and receiving peer feedback.	41	2.7317	1.04939	1.00	5.00
Mid_i prefer focusing on macro issues when giving and receiving peer feedback.	41	2.6341	1.01873	1.00	5.00
Pre_i prefer focusing on both macro and micro issues when giving and receiving peer feedback.	41	4.2195	.79095	2.00	5.00
Mid_i prefer focusing on both macro and micro issues when giving and receiving peer feedback.	41	4.2195	.65239	2.00	5.00
Post_i prefer focusing on macro issues when giving and receiving peer feedback.	41	2.7073	.84392	1.00	4.00
Post_i prefer focusing on both macro and micro issues when giving and receiving peer feedback.	41	4.1463	.65425	2.00	5.00

Table 4.16: Test Statistics^d (preferences for one or two levels)

	Mid_i prefer focusing on macro issues when giving and receiving peer feedback. - Pre_i prefer focusing on macro issues when giving and receiving peer feedback.	Post_i prefer focusing on macro issues when giving and receiving peer feedback. - Mid_i prefer focusing on macro issues when giving and receiving peer feedback.	Mid_i prefer focusing on both macro and micro issues when giving and receiving peer feedback. - Pre_i prefer focusing on both macro and micro issues when giving and receiving peer feedback.	Post_i prefer focusing on both macro and micro issues when giving and receiving peer feedback. - Mid_i prefer focusing on both macro and micro issues when giving and receiving peer feedback.
Z	-.621 ^a	-.209 ^b	.000 ^c	-.579 ^a

Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.535	.835	1.000	.562
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- a. Based on positive ranks.
- b. Based on negative ranks.
- c. The sum of negative ranks equals the sum of positive ranks.
- d. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

Table 4.17: Descriptive Statistics (focusing on one level encourages participation in PF)

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Pre_focusing on one level encourages participation	41	2.6098	.91864	1.00	4.00
Mid_focusing on one level encourages participation	41	2.9756	.98711	1.00	5.00
Post_focusing on one level encourages participation in PF	41	2.9024	1.04415	1.00	5.00

Table 4.18: Test Statistics^c (focusing on one level encourages participation in PF)

	Mid_focusing on one level encourages participation - Pre_focusing on one level encourages participation	Post_focusing on one level encourages participation in PF - Mid_focusing on one level encourages participation
Z	-2.327 ^a	-.430 ^b
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.020	.667

- a. Based on negative ranks.
- b. Based on positive ranks.
- c. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

Table 4.19: Descriptive Statistics (appreciating the way PF was given)

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
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Pre_i appreciated the way that my classmates gave me written comments on my essays.	41	4.0732	.60788	3.00	5.00
Mid_i appreciated the way that my classmates gave me written comments on my essays.	41	4.2927	.64202	2.00	5.00
Post_i appreciated the way that my classmates gave me written comments on my essays.	41	4.1463	.61486	2.00	5.00

Table 4.20: Test Statistics^c (appreciating the way PF was given)

	Mid_i appreciated the way that my classmates gave me written comments on my essays. - Pre_i appreciated the way that my classmates gave me written comments on my essays.	Post_i appreciated the way that my classmates gave me written comments on my essays. - Mid_i appreciated the way that my classmates gave me written comments on my essays.
Z	-1.784 ^a	-1.604 ^b
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.074	.109

a. Based on negative ranks.

b. Based on positive ranks.

c. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

Table 4.21: Descriptive Statistics (effects on writing)

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
PrePFeffectonwriting	41	3.9561	.65040	2.40	5.00
MidPFeffectonwriting	41	4.1073	.63576	2.00	5.00
PostPFeffectonwriting	41	4.1707	.60755	2.60	5.00

Table 4.22a: Test Statistics^b (effects on writing)

	MidPFeffectonwriting - PrePFeffectonwriting	PostPFeffectonwriting - MidPFeffectonwriting
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Z	-1.687 ^a	-.769 ^a
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.092	.442

a. Based on negative ranks.

b. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

Table 4.22b: Test Statistics^b (effects on writing)

	PostPEffectonwriting - PrePEffectonwriting
Z	-2.444 ^a
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.015

a. Based on negative ranks.

b. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

Table 4.23: Descriptive Statistics (critical thinking)

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Pre_i felt that I was critical of others when commenting on peers' work.	41	3.0732	.72077	1.00	5.00
Mid_i felt that I was critical of others when commenting on peers' work.	41	3.1220	.97967	1.00	5.00
Post_i felt that I was critical of others when commenting on peers' work.	41	3.0732	.75466	1.00	4.00

Table 4.24: Test Statistics^c (critical thinking)

	Mid_i felt that I was critical of others when commenting on peers' work. - Pre_i felt that I was critical of others when commenting on peers' work.	Post_i felt that I was critical of others when commenting on peers' work. - Mid_i felt that I was critical of others when commenting on peers' work.
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Z	-.275 ^a	-.253 ^b
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.783	.801

a. Based on negative ranks.

b. Based on positive ranks.

c. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

Table 4. 25: Descriptive Statistics (Raw data from the questionnaire)

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
PRE_QUESTIONNAIRE DATA			
I find writing interesting	41	4.2927	.67985
I find practice in writing useful	41	4.5122	.67535
Recoding of q3	41	2.8049	1.00547
using peer feedback technique in writing is interesting.	41	3.9512	.66900
Recoding of q5	41	3.5854	.89375
peer feedback is reliable as a source of information.	41	2.8293	.99756
Recoding of q7	41	3.7073	.95509
reading my classmates' comments is useful and beneficial.	41	4.0000	.70711
peer feedback is a useful technique for improving writing skills.	41	3.9512	.97343
Recoding of q10	41	3.7805	.82195
i do my best to give helpful feedback to my colleagues.	41	4.2195	.65239
i recommend peer feedback for future classes.	41	3.8780	.97967
i have a very strong desire to learn writing.	41	4.5366	.55216
Recoding of 14	41	2.7561	1.11311
i am prepared to expend a lot of effort in learning composition.	41	4.3902	.66626
Recoding of q16	41	3.7805	.85183
i always think over what we learn in peer feedback sessions.	41	3.5366	.71055
if peer feedback were used	41	3.4634	.92460

outside the class, I would try to participate in it.			
during peer feedback activities, I work very carefully and try to make sure I understand everything.	41	4.0732	.60788
Recoding of q20	41	3.6341	1.06668
Recoding of q21	41	3.6585	1.13159
i am willing to work hard at using peer feedback in composition.	41	3.8780	.81225
if peer feedback sessions were offered in the future, I would like to take them.	41	3.8537	.93704
Pre_i appreciated the way that my classmates gave me written comments on my essays.	41	4.0732	.60788
when my colleague gives me feedback, I want to see comments indicating errors in spelling and vocabulary.	41	4.1220	.67805
Recoding of q26	41	3.8049	.98029
when my colleague gives me feedback, I want to see comments on the organisation of my essay.	41	3.7317	.92262
Recoding of q28	41	3.5610	1.07352
Pre_i prefer focusing on macro issues when giving and receiving peer feedback.	41	2.7317	1.04939
Pre_i prefer focusing on both macro and micro issues when giving and receiving peer feedback.	41	4.2195	.79095
Pre_focusing on one level encourages participation	41	2.6098	.91864
reading my classmates' essays helps me to improve the organisation of my composition.	41	4.1951	.78165
my essays improve after revisions.	41	4.0976	.58330

Recoding of q34	41	3.7805	.90863
after each revision, the organisation of my essay became better.	41	3.8049	.78165
Recoding of q36	41	3.9024	1.01992
Pre_i felt that I was critical of others when commenting on peers' work.	41	3.0732	.72077
Pre_how much peer feedback did you use?	41	2.5610	.97593
Pre_how much peer feedback did you reject?	41	1.9024	.91665
Pre_how much peer feedback did you ignore?	41	1.6098	.73750
MID_QUESTIONNAIRE DATA			
I find writing interesting	41	4.3171	.60988
I find practice in writing useful	41	4.7317	.44857
recoding of Q3	41	2.9756	.98711
using peer feedback technique in writing is interesting.	41	3.9512	.94740
recoding of q5	41	3.8780	.92723
peer feedback is reliable as a source of information.	41	2.8537	1.10817
recoding of q7	41	4.1220	.67805
reading my classmates' comments is useful and beneficial.	41	4.0488	.70538
peer feedback is a useful technique for improving writing skills.	41	3.8780	1.02944
recoding of q10	41	4.0732	1.05807
i do my best to give helpful feedback to my colleagues.	41	4.1707	.80319
i recommend peer feedback for future classes.	41	4.0732	1.12673
i have a very strong desire to learn writing.	41	4.5366	.55216
recoding of q14	41	2.7805	1.10707
i am prepared to expend a lot of effort in learning composition.	41	4.0488	.70538

recoding of q16	41	4.0244	.93509
i always think over what we learn in peer feedback sessions.	41	3.7805	.75869
if peer feedback were used outside the class, I would try to participate in it.	41	3.6098	.97155
during peer feedback activities, I work very carefully and try to make sure I understand everything.	41	4.0976	.66351
recoding of q20	41	3.9024	1.06782
recoding of q21	41	4.0488	.92063
i am willing to work hard at using peer feedback in composition.	41	4.0976	.76827
if peer feedback sessions were offered in the future, I would like to take them.	41	3.9756	.87999
Mid_i appreciated the way that my classmates gave me written comments on my essays.	41	4.2927	.64202
when my colleague gives me feedback, I want to see comments indicating errors in spelling and vocabulary.	41	4.1220	.87164
recoding of q26	41	3.9268	.87722
when my colleague gives me feedback, I want to see comments on the organisation of my essay.	41	3.8293	.77144
recoding of q28	41	3.7805	.88069
Mid_i prefer focusing on macro issues when giving and receiving peer feedback.	41	2.6341	1.01873
Mid_i prefer focusing on both macro and micro issues when giving and receiving peer feedback.	41	4.2195	.65239
Mid_focusing on one level encourages participation	41	2.9756	.98711
reading my classmates'	41	4.3171	.56741

essays helps me to improve the organisation of my composition.			
my essays improve after revisions.	41	4.1707	.89170
recoding of q34	41	4.0000	1.00000
after each revision, the organisation of my essay became better.	41	3.9512	.77302
recoding of q36	41	4.0976	.91665
Mid_i felt that I was critical of others when commenting on peers' work.	41	3.1220	.97967
Mid_how much peer feedback did you use?	41	3.2195	.79095
Mid_how much peer feedback did you reject?	41	1.9512	.77302
Mid_how much peer feedback did you ignore?	41	1.8780	.71397
POST_QUESTIONNAIRE DATA			
I find writing interesting	41	4.4146	.66991
I find practice in writing useful	41	4.6829	.47112
Recoding of q3	41	3.1951	1.07749
using peer feedback technique in writing is interesting.	41	4.0488	.77302
Recoding of q5	41	3.8537	.72667
peer feedback is reliable as a source of information.	41	2.7561	.96903
Recoding of q7	41	3.8537	.98896
reading my classmates' comments is useful and beneficial.	41	4.0000	.74162
peer feedback is a useful technique for improving writing skills.	41	3.9512	.83520
Recoding of q10	41	3.9512	.94740
i do my best to give helpful feedback to my colleagues.	41	4.2439	.66259
i recommend peer feedback for future classes.	41	4.1951	.98029
i have a very strong desire	41	4.4878	.63726

to learn writing.			
Recoding of q14	41	2.6585	1.19603
i am prepared to expend a lot of effort in learning composition.	41	4.1707	.77144
Recoding of q16	41	4.1220	.78087
i always think over what we learn in peer feedback sessions.	41	3.9756	.72415
if peer feedback were used outside the class, I would try to participate in it.	41	3.6341	.99388
during peer feedback activities, I work very carefully and try to make sure I understand everything.	41	4.0732	.68521
Recoding of q20	41	3.9512	.89306
Recoding of q21	41	4.2439	.73418
i am willing to work hard at using peer feedback in composition.	41	4.0732	.75466
if peer feedback sessions were offered in the future, I would like to take them.	41	3.9756	.93509
Post_i appreciated the way that my classmates gave me written comments on my essays.	41	4.1463	.61486
when my colleague gives me feedback, I want to see comments indicating errors in spelling and vocabulary.	41	3.8537	.96335
Recoding of q26	41	4.0488	.86462
when my colleague gives me feedback, I want to see comments on the organisation of my essay.	41	4.1220	.67805
Recoding of q28	41	3.8049	1.10044
Post_i prefer focusing on macro issues when giving and receiving peer feedback.	41	2.7073	.84392
Post_i prefer focusing on both macro and micro	41	4.1463	.65425

issues when giving and receiving peer feedback.			
Post_focusing on one level encourages participation in PF	41	2.9024	1.04415
reading my classmates' essays helps me to improve the organisation of my composition.	41	4.2195	.65239
my essays improve after revisions.	41	4.1707	.73832
Recoding of q34	41	4.0976	.88896
after each revision, the organisation of my essay became better.	41	4.0732	.75466
Recoding of q36	41	4.2927	.71568
Post_i felt that I was critical of others when commenting on peers' work.	41	3.0732	.75466
Post_how much peer feedback did you use?	41	3.4146	.77381
Post_how much peer feedback did you reject?	41	2.0976	.70017
Post_how much peer feedback did you ignore?	41	2.0244	.82121
Valid N (listwise)	41		

Table 4.26: Raw data of participants' tests results

Case	Organisation/Unity			Development			Cohesion/Coherence			Structure			Vocabulary			Mechanics			Overall grade		
	pre	mid	post	pre	mid	post	pre	mid	post	pre	mid	post	pre	mid	post	pre	mid	post	pre	mid	post
1.	1.5	3	6.5	1.5	2.5	7	1.5	2.5	6	1.5	2.5	6.5	2.5	3	7	2.5	3	6.5	1.833333333	2.75	6.58333
2.	1	2.5	6.5	2	3	5.5	1.5	3	6.5	2.5	3.5	7	1.5	3.5	7	1.5	3.5	6.5	1.666666667	3.16667	6.5
3.	3.5	5.5	7.5	3.5	5	7	3	5	7.5	5	6	6.5	4.5	5	6.5	5	5	7	4.083333333	5.25	7
4.	4	4	6	3	4.5	6.5	4	4	6.5	2.5	4	5	2	3.5	4.5	3.5	5	6	3.166666667	4.16667	5.75
5.	4	4	6	2.5	3.5	6	3	3.5	6	3.5	3.5	3	3	4.5	5	4	5	6.5	3.333333333	4	5.41667
6.	3.5	5	7	4	4.5	7.5	3	4	8	4	4	7	2.5	3.5	6.5	4.5	4.5	6.5	3.583333333	4.25	7.08333
7.	3.5	5	7	3.5	4.5	6.5	3	4.5	7.5	2	3.5	4.5	3	4.5	5.5	3	5.5	7	3	4.58333	6.33333
8.	3.5	5	6.5	3	4.5	6.5	2	4	7	2.5	3.5	5	2.5	4.5	6	4	5	6	2.916666667	4.41667	6.16667
9.	4	4	5	3	3.5	6	2.5	3	6	2	2.5	4	2.5	3	5	3.5	3.5	5.5	2.916666667	3.25	5.25
10.	4.5	5.5	7	4	5	7	4	5	7.5	4.5	4.5	6.5	5	4	7	4.5	4.5	7	4.416666667	4.75	7
11.	3.5	5.5	5.5	3	4.5	6.5	3.5	5.5	5.5	3	4	4.5	2.5	3.5	5.5	4	4.5	4	3.25	4.58333	5.25
12.	6	7	9.5	6	6.5	9	6.5	7.5	8.5	6	6.5	9	5.5	7.5	9.5	6	7	9.5	6	7	9.16667
13.	4.5	4.5	5.5	3.5	3.5	5.5	3.5	3.5	5.5	3	4	5.5	3	3.5	5.5	3.5	4.5	6	3.5	3.91667	5.58333
14.	1.5	3	4	1.5	4	5.5	2	4.5	5.5	2.5	3	5.5	1.5	4	4.5	2.5	4.5	4.5	1.916666667	3.83333	4.91667
15.	4	5	5.5	2.5	6	6	3.5	5.5	6.5	3.5	4.5	6	4.5	5.5	6	4	5	5	3.666666667	5.25	5.83333
16.	2	4.5	6	2.5	4	6.5	2.5	3.5	5.5	1	3	5	2	3.5	5.5	2.5	4.5	5.5	2.083333333	3.83333	5.66667
17.	3.5	4.5	7	2.5	4.5	7.5	2.5	5	6.5	1.5	3.5	5.5	2.5	3.5	6	3	5.5	7	2.583333333	4.41667	6.58333
18.	2.5	4.5	6	3	4.5	4.5	3	3.5	5.5	3	3.5	4	3.5	4	4.5	2.5	4	4.5	2.916666667	4	4.83333

19.	2.5	3.5	5	2.5	3.5	4.5	2.5	3	4	2	3	4	2	3	5	3	4	4	2.416666667	3.33333	4.41667
20.	6.5	7	9.5	6.5	6	9.5	5	6.5	9	7	5.5	9	6.5	6.5	9.5	6.5	7	9	6.333333333	6.41667	9.25
21.	2.5	4.5	6.5	2	4	6	2.5	3	5.5	2.5	4.5	6	2	5	5.5	3	5	5.5	2.416666667	4.33333	5.83333
22.	5.5	6.5	9.5	4.5	5.5	8.5	5	6	9	5	5.5	9.5	5	6	8.5	6	6.5	10	5.166666667	6	9.16667
23.	5.5	5.5	6.5	3.5	5	6.5	4.5	5	6	4.5	5	5	4	5	5.5	5	5.5	5.5	4.5	5.16667	5.83333
24.	2	3	3.5	2.5	2.5	4	2.5	3	4	2.5	3	4.5	2	3.5	4	2.5	2.5	4	2.333333333	2.91667	4
25.	2.5	5	5.5	3.5	4.5	4.5	3	5	5	4	5	4.5	4	5	4.5	5	4.5	3.5	3.666666667	4.83333	4.58333
26.	4	6	7	2.5	6	7.5	3	6.5	6.5	2.5	5.5	6.5	3	5	6	4.5	6	6.5	3.25	5.83333	6.66667
27.	4	5.5	7.5	4	5	8	3	5	7.5	4	4.5	7.5	4.5	5	7	4	4.5	6.5	3.916666667	4.91667	7.33333
28.	4.5	6	8	5	7	8.5	5.5	6.5	8.5	5	6.5	7.5	4.5	6	8	5	6	7.5	4.916666667	6.33333	8
29.	1.5	4.5	6	3	5	5.5	3	5	6.5	3.5	4	4.5	3	4	5.5	3.5	5	6	2.916666667	4.58333	5.66667
30.	5	6.5	8	6	6	7	6	7	8.5	5.5	6.5	7.5	5	7	7	6.5	6.5	6	5.666666667	6.58333	7.33333
31.	2	5	5.5	2	4	4.5	1	4	5.5	1.5	3	3.5	2	4	4	2	3.5	4.5	1.75	3.91667	4.58333
32.	4	4	6	3.5	4	6	2	3	6.5	3	4	5.5	2	3	5.5	4	4.5	6	3.083333333	3.75	5.91667
33.	3	5	7.5	4.5	4	6	5	3	6.5	3.5	2	6.5	3.5	3	5.5	3.5	4.5	6.5	3.833333333	3.58333	6.41667
34.	5.5	5.5	7	4.5	5	6	4.5	6	6	5	5	6.5	4.5	5	6	5	5	5.5	4.833333333	5.25	6.16667
35.	2.5	5	5.5	4	5	5	4	3.5	6	2	3.5	4.5	3	4.5	5	2	4.5	5.5	2.916666667	4.33333	5.25
36.	4.5	5	7	4	4.5	6.5	3	4.5	6.5	4	4	5	4	4.5	6	3.5	4	5.5	3.833333333	4.41667	6.08333
37.	3	5	7.5	3	5	7	2.5	4	5.5	3	4.5	5.5	3.5	5	6.5	4.5	5	7	3.25	4.75	6.5
38.	2.5	4.5	6	3.5	5	5	3	4	6	3	4.5	5	4	4.5	5.5	3.5	4.5	5.5	3.25	4.5	5.5
39.	2.5	4.5	6	2	3.5	6	2	3.5	5.5	1.5	3	4.5	2	4	4.5	2.5	4	5.5	2.083333333	3.75	5.33333
40.	4	5	6	3.5	4	5	2	4	5	1.5	3.5	5	2	3.5	4.5	3	4.5	6	2.666666667	4.08333	5.25

41.	4.5	5	6.5	5	4.5	6.5	5.5	5.5	6	5	4.5	5	4	4	6	5	4.5	6.5	4.833333333	4.66667	6.08333
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Appendix VIII

Percentages sheet (phase one)

Your name:

Essay title:

After receiving feedback on your essay from your colleague, please complete the following by providing numbers:

- I received from my colleague _____ comments. There were _____ *macro* (global) comments and _____ *micro* (local) comments.

 - Of these comments, I:
 - **used** _____ macro (global) comments and _____ micro (local) comments,

 - **ignored** _____ macro (global) comments and _____ micro (local) comments,

 - **and rejected** _____ macro (global) comments and _____ micro (local) comments.
-
-

Percentages sheet (phase two)

Your name:

Essay title:

After receiving feedback on your essay from your colleague, please complete the following by providing numbers:

- I received from my colleague a total of _____ *macro* comments.

- Of these comments, I:
 - **used** _____ comments,

 - **ignored** _____ comments,

 - and **rejected** _____ comments.

Appendix IX

Mid- & post-interviews (transcript)

Mid-interviews

Student 1: (No. 6)

1- How do you feel about writing? Can you explain why?

S: A wonderful feeling doctor because everything here in our department is dependent on writing. So, if your graduation is based on speaking and writing and you improve your writing, you will improve everything and find everything you need.

T: So, you mean that your feeling towards writing is...

S: Is so great.

2- To what extent do you want to learn writing?

S: To the highest extent.

T: Can you explain how, giving examples?

S: As I said doctor, with writing you can get everything you need. So, improving writing... I don't know how to explain this...

T: So if you improved your writing what can you accomplish?

S: So many things and this will have an effect on different things in my life.

3- Do you think your own writing changed as a result of PF? If so, how do you think it changed?

S: Yes doctor. It really depends on the student you are working with. If he (the other student) has enough linguistic knowledge, he will provide you with accurate information, which is reliable and then you will use it.

T: To what extent do you think your writing has improved?

S: It has improved on a large scale. As evidence of this, in the past, when I wanted to write something, I didn't revise at all but here, I write, revise and then produce the second draft. Another thing is that when I read my colleague's essay, I learn new vocabulary.

T: What was it about PF that led to those changes?

S: The feedback, the received comments. It really depends on the comments, the stronger they are the more I benefit. In addition, the fact that we are reading peers' essays and commenting on them, negotiating with colleagues, also has an effect on our writing.

4- How do you feel about PF? Can you explain why?

S: The same thing, a wonderful feeling doctor and I hope it will be used in future levels (academic levels).

T: Is there a reason that makes you feel this way?

S: Yes, there is. First, you see how others are writing their own essays, which allows you to compare between yours and his. Sometimes you see better things in his essay than what you have written and vice versa. Secondly, you sometimes acquire new vocabulary. Sometimes, when you memorise new vocabulary alone, you don't remember them but when you see them in context, you will benefit more by memorising them naturally.

5- How keen are you to use PF technique in writing classes?

S: Very keen to use it doctor.

T: Can you explain more?

S: It is important to use this technique because, if I attend the class I will benefit, if I don't, I won't.

6- What advantages and disadvantages do you think PF has?

S: There are more advantages than disadvantages. Its advantages really depend on the student you are working with. If he is working hard and keen to work, you will benefit from this technique. Even if you are a lazy student, he will help your work and help you benefit from this technique. In addition, if this student has good knowledge you will benefit from him.

Disadvantages also depend on the student you are working with. For example, if the other student is careless and you are keen in the process. Another disadvantage is that if you are trying to motivate the other student to work hard but he doesn't respond to you because he doesn't accept this idea of peer feedback.

7- Do you prefer giving and receiving FB based on *macro* & *micro* levels? Or just one level? Why?

S: Of course on two levels because if we left one level there would be no benefit, in my opinion. So, if I received feedback from my colleague on organisation and didn't receive anything on the grammar and spelling, I believe there would be a problem and vice versa. Therefore, feedback has to be given based on the two levels.

8- Did you use, ignore or reject any of the received feedback? Why?

S: Yes, I used and rejected too. I used a lot, say 85% up to 90% and all through the previous period I only rejected two comments.

T: What about ignoring the received comments?

S: I don't think I ignored many comments, perhaps one or two comments and this is included in the remaining 10% of the received comments.

T: This 10% you rejected and ignored, is there a reason for that?

S: Well, every student has his own way in writing. So, for example, if you like writing long sentences, I have a rule that long sentences will include too many mistakes. Therefore, I prefer short sentences. Here, I must reject the received comment.

T: And ignoring the comments?

S: The same thing but you don't ignore it immediately, you receive it first and if the other student didn't accept the reason of you not accepting this comment, you just ignore it without mentioning this him.

T: So, generally speaking, the problems are usually found in the style of writing.

S: Yes, of course. Grammar is not that troubling.

T: So, you didn't reject or ignore any incorrect information? Didn't you find this problematic?

S: Well, if the other student provides incorrect comments and I am sure of the mistake, I correct for him.

T: Has it occurred before?

S: No, it hasn't happened at all.

9- Do you have any recommendations for improving the way PF is used?

S: Yes, I believe that there should be some training in the basics of essay writing at the beginning of the course. I remember some of my colleagues who didn't know how write an essay. Also, students should be motivated to use PF by explaining its advantages. At the moment students may not recognise them but with more practice they will know.

10- Do you think peer feedback should continue to be used in future classes? Can you explain why?

S: Yes, I strongly believe so.

T: Why is that?

S: Because there is a rule that says practice makes perfect • the more we practise writing, the more improvement there will be.

T: But you can practise writing without using PF.

S: Sorry doctor, there must be PF with writing practice because practising writing involves writing two essays and revising my essay and others' essays.

T: Is there anything you'd like add?

S: No thanks doctor.

Student 2: (No. 10)

1- How do you feel about writing? Can you explain why?

S: Normal feeling, soothing feeling. If I was learning writing from the beginning, I'd say it's difficult. But now we've been writing for a very long time, so writing is a normal thing to me.

T: So, do you describe you feeling as positive or negative?

S: Positive of course.

T: Why is this?

S: Because I like English, this is why I like anything related to the English language.

2- To what extent do you want to learn writing? Can you explain how, giving examples?

S: To the farthest thing I can do. I am trying to reach perfection in every skill of English language: speaking, listening, everything.

T: Can you give more examples/explanation?

S: Well, I want to improve everything but I didn't make any attempt. However, now, with your class, whenever you ask for any assignment, I try to bring it on time because I try to benefit more.

3- Do you think your own writing changed as a result of PF?

S: It has improved a lot. In the past I was not aware of some of the mistakes I had made and a few things I was not sure about. However, with this technique they have improved a lot.

T: How do you think it has changed?

S: To a high extent.

T: What was it about PF that led to those changes?

S: PF itself led to these changes. Taking information from your colleague, who is a friend with no cultural barriers, no fear, like the fear between the teacher and the students. Between you and your friend, you can have a comfortable discussion and disagree whenever you want. With PF I feel comfortable, with no fear.

4- How do you feel about PF? Can you explain why?

S: I like it, it's excellent. I feel positive. As I said, this technique showed me some mistakes I was not aware of in the past and mistakes I was uncertain of.

5- How keen are you to use the PF technique in writing classes?

S: In the past I didn't use it but now I am using it, with my brother in our house. Therefore, I am very keen to use it.

6- What advantages and disadvantages do you think PF has?

S: The advantages are, as I said, a colleague is the one to teach you about your mistakes. So there is no fear barrier. Disadvantages are that it consumes time, especially when you are waiting for your colleague to come and provide you with the comments and discuss them with you. If he is absent, you get in to a difficult situation.

- 7- Do you prefer giving and receiving FB based on *macro* & *micro* levels? Or just one level? Why?

S: Both levels, so we can both benefit more at both levels.

- 8- Did you use, ignore or reject any of the received feedback? Why?

S: I used lots of the FB, say about 80%. I ignored some comments because they were a point of view we both were uncertain of. I rejected some comments because I thought they were correct at the micro level and semantically correct as well but he insisted that they were incorrect. However, if it was proved to be wrong, I would accept it.

- 9- Do you have any recommendations for improving the way PF is used?

S: No. I like it in the way it's been used.

- 10- Do you think peer feedback should continue to be used in future classes? Can you explain why?

S: Strongly recommend it. It's a great technique. As I said, learn your mistakes from a colleague. In addition, there are some students who are great writers and have the ability to locate writing problems, so you can benefit from them. They can help you as a friend; you can reach them any time, even after class time. But the doctor (teacher) is not available all the time.

Student 3: (No. 11)

1- How do you feel about writing? Can you explain why?

S: Well, it is a mean that allows me to express myself more. It is different for me when I speak and when I write; in writing I can express myself more.

T: So do you describe it as positive or negative?

S: Positive surely.

2- To what extent do you want to learn writing? Can you explain how, giving examples?

S: I want to learn it to its highest extent. This is because I feel that my writing is somehow weak, especially the fact that writing has changed because of technology; general writing (chatting and so on) is different from academic writing.

3- Do you think your own writing changed as a result of PF?

S: Yes, it has improved because it's a new experience.

T: How do you think it changed? To what extent?

S: Well, it hasn't changed fundamentally but it is a new experience to have a student evaluating, rather than the teacher. The student usually takes in a different view from the teacher and widens my horizons, especially when you see how others are thinking, which is a different way from the teacher.

T: How do you mean different way ?

S: I mean, for example, when you evaluate your colleague, you see your mistakes in your friend. The teacher usually looks at it in a more general way but the student tends to see his own mistakes in his friend's (his essay) and become more specific.

T: What was it about PF that led to those changes?

S: I think it was because I had more time to sit with my colleague and discuss things related to the topic.

T: Do you mean the communication?

S: Yes, the communication between me and my colleague.

4- How do you feel about PF? Can you explain why?

S: Of course, I prefer it to any other technique. I've been at this university for a very long time and I prefer this to the traditional technique.

T: What traditional technique?

S: The technique that we are all used to in the university, which is an exam or an assignment taken by the doctor and rare feedback received in return and rarely seeing my faults. On the contrary, here it is possible for me to discuss, talk and negotiate.

T: So do you describe your feeling as...

S: Highly positive of course.

5- How keen are you to use the PF technique in writing classes?

S: To be honest, if it's available at any time, I will be very keen to use it. However, unfortunately, it is not available.

6- What advantages and disadvantages do you think PF has?

S: It has the advantage that it provides you with a wider space to comprehend your mistakes from someone who is similar to you, a friend. You can also learn about your mistakes, go back and fix them. It allows you to express yourself and try the skills yourself. Especially when you are about to graduate to become part of the education field, or study an MA or PhD, this technique will be beneficial

because you are learning from the mistakes you make and from locating your colleagues' mistakes. Regarding the disadvantages, until now I don't think there are any, probably because it is a new technique and it's a completely good experience.

- 7- Do you prefer giving and receiving FB based on *macro* & *micro* levels? Or just one level? Why?

S: Of course on both levels because either way he will be giving feedback, so it's good to receive FB based on two levels. I also like to give FB on both levels because I find myself good at them and feel that I want to benefit the other students.

- 8- Did you use, ignore or reject any of the received feedback? Why?

S: Yes, I ignored some comments; say about 30-40%. Because when you write, you write what you want, so sometimes you don't take into consideration some ideas, due to their inappropriateness to my logic. In addition, I didn't reject any comment. The comments I used were in place and reasonable. They were mostly at a micro level; they were so obvious.

- 9- Do you have any recommendations for improving the way PF is used?

S: It's a new experience to us and it is a well-organised experience, honestly. I personally like it; it's easy, not complicated. So, the only recommendation is to make it more available throughout the university.

- 10- Do you think peer feedback should continue to be used in future classes?

S: Sure.

T: Can you explain why?

S: Because each time you discover some mistakes and need someone to help you fix them. Each time you need to discuss with your friend and learn by widening your horizons.

T: Anything to add?

S: No thanks.

Student 4: (No. 12)

1- How do you feel about writing? Can you explain why?

S: I love writing. I write in my diary everyday and I'm semi-authoring a story. So I like writing a lot. I like the different styles in it, I really do enjoy writing.

2- To what extent do you want to learn writing? Can you explain how, giving examples?

S: To the fullest because writing is one of the only ways that you can advance how you speak • the better you speak the better you comprehend and think. Though advanced writing is somewhat more difficult, I intend to master it.

3- Do you think your own writing changed as a result of PF? If so, how do you think it changed?

S: Yes, it changed. I've had a colleague in the past who used to help me in academic writing. I have believed in PF for a very long time. I remember, in one of the previous writing courses, I tried to seek one teacher's FB on my essay and he told me that he couldn't read all of our essays, due to having too many students- 55- in the class. So the only FB we received was generally on common mistakes but no individual mistakes. This is one of the reasons for believing in PF.

T: What was it about PF that led to those changes?

S: Well, with a teacher, he has to be somehow strict towards students because he has to give marks. Therefore, it is a one-way FB. However, in PF it is a two-way FB. In addition, PF is not as intimidating as the situation between the teacher and the student.

4- How do you feel about PF? Can you explain why?

S: I love the concept but I have questions about the efficiency of it, i.e., the level of the students. For example, if two students of a low level are working together, they will help each other but their pace will be slow, they will be climbing slowly and vice versa. In other words, the better the other person is, the better you get. Still, PF doesn't make students feel alienated; they don't feel alone in the class. However, if two students of a different proficiency level work together, the low one will benefit but the high one will not. Anyway, it allows practice of criticism. So, by the end of the term you can pick up a paper and see more important things than spelling, you see coherence, you see things you didn't see before. One problem with PF is that sometimes you have a shy student and a confident student, creating a formality between the students which needs to be broken down.

In conclusion, I like PF a lot. Because the ratio of formality between the teacher and the student is high, I think it is the way of the future.

5- How keen are you to use the PF technique in writing classes?

S: In writing, I believe it is the only way to learn. In other classes I don't believe so but in writing you have to do peer to peer. It is impossible for a teacher to take in 50 essays a week. It is also impossible for you to advance in writing unless you start writing. So you have to do it peer to peer.

6- What advantages and disadvantages do you think PF has?

S: The advantages are; it's more fun; it's more open minded; it's a new generation, so the students don't feel dragged in to sitting in the class, doing

same old same old; peer to peer has this new element that the class isn't as silent as you expect it, there is talking and chatter, it feels something new; there is energy in the room. In addition, students can catch up after class. So those are the pros.

The disadvantages are that it is new and everything new is fought against. Students might not like new things because they become concerned about how the marking will be and how it will affect their GPA. This usually happens when students are not fully aware of the new technique and how it works. Also, in a PF session it gets harder for the teacher to manage the class because some of the students might laugh and giggle, not focusing on the work.

- 7- Do you prefer giving and receiving FB based on *macro & micro* levels? Or just one level? Why?

S: It really depends on the students. For example, if I read a students' essay and there were too many micro mistakes and few macro faults, there is no need to become negative and poke at those grammatical mistakes. So here, I'd prefer to leave the micro and focus on the macro. I'd use them both, in case there is a balance of mistakes in both levels. Anyway, the micros are not huge obstacles; they could be fixed using word processors or many other programmes. I believe the only way to fix macros is PF. Focusing on that (macro) is more important.

- 8- Did you use, ignore or reject any of the received feedback? Why?

S: I used all of it, even though some of it wasn't really FB, for example, this is a great essay • I did ignore some FB related to word preferences because this is my style.

- 9- Do you have any recommendations for improving the way PF is used?

S: I prefer not having a word limit; I prefer allowing the students to express themselves. I would also like the college to have an awareness campaign on what PF is.

10- Do you think peer feedback should continue to be used in future classes? Can you explain why?

S: In writing it's a must because it is impossible for any teacher to truly grade 55-60 a week. I believe in writing it's the only way to do it.

Student 5: (No. 19)

1- How do you feel about writing? Can you explain why?

S: A positive feeling. I feel like I want to learn to write at a professional level, as an MA/PhD student. That is to write in an academic way.

2- To what extent do you want to learn writing? Can you explain how, giving examples?

S: To an endless extent. I need to fix my grammar, improve my vocabulary, my way of writing and the organisation of my essays.

3- Do you think your own writing changed as a result of PF?

S: Yes, it has improved a lot.

T: How do you think it has changed?

S: It has changed a lot. I have the chance to practise writing much more than before. My grammar has been fixed and the vocabulary in a constant manner.

T: And what was it about PF that led to those changes?

S: Having my essays criticised by a colleague. A colleague discovers my mistakes that I was not aware of because of fast writing.

4- How do you feel about PF? Can you explain why?

S: I think it is the best way of learning and fixing mistakes. It gives you a feeling of self-improvement. Therefore, my feeling is positive.

5- How keen are you to use the PF technique in writing classes?

S: Very keen to use it, though it requires too much effort.

6- What advantages and disadvantages do you think PF has?

S: Many advantages and no disadvantages. Some students prefer the old method and others prefer this new method.

T: What do you mean by old method •

S: Old method • means to write an essay without giving it to anyone to critique and give comments. In the new method, you participate with your colleagues to help each other in improving your essays. I mean that you benefit from your own mistakes.

T: Do you receive FB in the old method?

S: NO! You just write and then submit it, that's it. At the end you only get a grade.

7- Do you prefer giving and receiving FB based on *macro* & *micro* levels? Or just one level? Why?

S: I prefer receiving FB based on two levels. Because this is the way I can benefit and improve my writing. I also like to give FB on both levels, to allow my colleague to benefit from his own mistakes.

8- Did you use, ignore or reject any of the received feedback? Why?

S: I used all of the received comments. Because I believe that my colleague is being honest with me and that he is not going to cheat me, nor will I.

9- Do you have any recommendations for improving the way PF is used?

S: I strongly recommend this technique for future classes, because this technique helps students to improve their writing and teaches them how to write at an advanced level. Finally, it helps improve their grammar, structure, vocabulary and acquire many other things.

10- Do you think peer feedback should continue to be used in future classes? Can you explain why?

S: Yes, because of its advantages.

Student 6: (No. 20)

1- How do you feel about writing? Can you explain why?

S: I prefer writing in English more than Arabic because I can express myself easier in English and I find Arabic grammar more difficult. Therefore, English writing is a positive thing to me.

2- To what extent do you want to learn writing? Can you explain how, giving examples?

S: As much as I can. I mean to the extent that I can produce published articles.

3- Do you think your own writing changed as a result of PF? If so, how do you think it changed?

S: Frankly, at the beginning I didn't notice any difference or effect on my writing. However, after a while, I felt that my writing began to become smoother. I began to benefit from PF when I started to choose different colleagues. I noticed that my style in writing began to improve. However,

having the same friend means having the same ideas, nothing new will be introduced.

T: So, to what extent has your writing improved?

S: If I gave it a scale out of ten, I'd say 6/7.

T: What was it about PF that led to those changes?

S: I think the ability to open myself up to others to critique and accept their criticism. In other words, the way I dealt with criticism/feedback helped me to improve and benefit from PF. So I accepted it as a positive thing.

4- How do you feel about PF? Can you explain why?

S: Well, I think it is a technique that should be used as part of the curriculum to a certain point but not during the whole course. In other words, it should be used with certain limits.

T: But overall, do you feel positive or negative towards it?

S: Positive of course.

5- How keen are you to use PF technique in writing classes?

S: I recommend using it with certain restrictions and rules; that is, to vary the use of techniques and colleagues.

T: How did you receive FB in the past?

S: In the past we used to depend on ourselves. The teacher sometimes provided FB by underlining the problematic sentence, without any justification and when you sought justification, he didn't provide it. I believe this technique should be used in earlier writing courses.

6- What advantages and disadvantages do you think PF has?

S: The advantages include an improvement in writing. Disadvantages include the fact that this technique is being used for a whole semester and that we meet with the same colleague more than once.

T: So, what is the negative effect of having this technique used for the whole course?

S: I believe, at a certain point, the student has to depend on himself.

7- Do you prefer giving and receiving FB based on *macro* & *micro* levels? Or just one level? Why?

S: Both levels because they complement each other. In addition, focusing on one level makes you feel that there is something missing.

8- Did you use, ignore or reject any of the received feedback? Why?

S: I haven't rejected any comment. I ignored one comment but kept it in mind in the following essay. I used almost every received comment because they were convincing.

9- Do you have any recommendations for improving the way PF is used?

S: Varying the colleagues should be considered. The differences in proficiency levels should also be taken into account. I remember benefiting from one colleague who has a higher proficiency level than me.

10- Do you think peer feedback should continue to be used in future classes? Can you explain why?

S: Of course. I think it is essential to learn how other students are writing, in order to share the knowledge.

Student 7: (No. 26)

1- How do you feel about writing? Can you explain why?

S: I have a good feeling about it. Everything now uses English; internet, media, any request and emails use English. This way I can benefit from learning English. In learning writing, the capacity for learning English is improving, such as vocabulary. In addition my speaking skills will improve by learning writing.

2- To what extent do you want to learn writing? Can you explain how, giving examples?

S: I want to improve my writing skills as far as I can. Anything I can learn, I am willing to learn.

T: Can you give an example?

S: Now, as you have taught us how to cite articles, this is something we didn't know. You gave us some examples and practice, which we benefited from. We used to write without citations or paraphrasing. So anyone can plagiarise without knowing it.

3- Do you think your own writing changed as a result of PF?

S: Yes because there were some mistakes I was unaware of. So my colleague was locating these mistakes, when I couldn't. He was showing me these mistakes, provided justifications and then I recognised them.

T: How do you think it changed?

S: Well, I'd say my writing is good, to the extent that I can deliver my message to the reader. But with the PF technique, there are some mistakes that got fixed, say about 15% and, as a result, my writing has improved. In general, PF led to good improvement.

T: What was it about PF that led to those changes?

S: Using the evaluation checklist is a reason for the improvement. It guided me to learn the points of strength and weakness. Especially when it's associated with proper comments, knowing that some of the students merely provide YES

or NO responses when giving feedback. Proper comments can help improve weaknesses and reinforce points of strength.

4- How do you feel about PF? Can you explain why?

S: I was hoping that this technique would be introduced in previous writing courses. Knowing that, in the previous essay writing course (level 4), I only wrote one essay and didn't receive any FB on it.

T: One essay in a whole semester?

S: Yes because the number of the students was large, the teacher didn't have time to provide every single student individual feedback. At the time the number of students ranged from 50 to 60 students in the class. Around 20 students didn't write an essay and I was one of them. Unfortunately, we didn't have the chance, though we were keen to do it.

5- How keen are you to use the PF technique in writing classes?

S: As I said, this technique is essential and should be applied all the time.

6- What advantages and disadvantages do you think PF has?

S: Until this moment I haven't encountered any disadvantages, other than the need to monitor the student feedback. A colleague can point at a correct form and say this is wrong • Here the other student can be misled. So the feedback given in the checklist should be revised by the teacher, although I know this can be difficult. In addition, by the end of the course, the teacher can discuss the common mistakes with the students, so they can benefit and learn more.

On the other hand, the advantages are that the student can learn his mistakes from different aspects; punctuation, spelling, form and all other aspects. In addition, the teacher himself can benefit from this technique. As I said before,

on a previous course, some students didn't get to write essays and receive FB. In this way the doctor (teacher) can cover all the students and check their writing.

- 7- Do you prefer giving and receiving FB based on *macro* & *micro* levels? Or just one level? Why?

S: Both levels of course. The macro level FB will help improvement in different aspects, as well as micro level FB. I also prefer to give feedback, even if there were no mistakes. All so both learners can benefit from the process.

- 8- Did you use, ignore or reject any of the received feedback? Why?

S: I used almost all of the received comments but I didn't reject or ignore any comment. When I become uncertain of any of the received feedback, I go back and check it with other student, so he can explain and prove his point of view and, therefore, I accept it. Of course this happens as a result of not providing any proper/justified comments in the evaluation checklist.

- 9- Do you have any recommendations for improving the way PF is used?

S: I think obligating students to write comments, rather than adding YES, NO responses is necessary. Secondly, the given comments should either be responding to wrong items or correct forms; how correct they are.

- 10- Do you think peer feedback should continue to be used in future classes? Can you explain why?

S: I strongly recommend it for future classes. Because this allows the writing of more than one essay: benefitting from your mistakes and benefitting your colleagues.

Student 8: (No. 29)

1- How do you feel about writing? Can you explain why?

S: The two main things I need to improve in English are pronunciation/speaking and writing. I feel that my skills in reading and listening are quite good. I still need to overcome some difficulties in speaking and writing though. In general, my feeling is positive, even though I find it difficult; I have the motivation to improve it.

2- To what extent do you want to learn writing? Can you explain how, giving examples?

S: To the extent that I become a professional. To the extent that I can produce published critical essays, social essays and more.

3- Do you think your own writing changed as a result of PF?

S: Yes, it has improved.

T: How do you think it has changed?

S: I'd say that around 80% of the problems I had have begun to improve. Especially the style, ever since I got into college I had one sentence that I used in my introductions. Then I was criticised that my writing would not improve if I followed the same style over and over again. So I began to use facts and so on, varying the introduction.

T: So, how was the old method?

S: My previous teachers didn't care about the style that much but here the style was commented on.

T: So, what sort of FB did you receive from your previous teacher?

S: The FB was only given on grammar, not on style and construction of my essays.

T: What was it about PF that led to those changes?

S: The focus on how to attract the reader in your essay, as a result of the criticism received on my essays. Also, the fact that there is no cultural barrier between you and your colleague is helpful. If you receive a comment from your doctor, you feel that he used very difficult criteria, which might not be understood but with your friend, who is of the same age and academic level, it is easy to discuss comments with him without any barriers. In other words, teacher feedback is given without justification and it has to be accepted but PF is given with proper justification and the learning here should last for life.

4- How do you feel about PF? Can you explain why?

S: I think it is very beneficial and I feel positive towards it. During writing you can't discover your own mistakes but when you come back to it, after a period of time, you are able to locate some obvious mistakes. So, why not locate these mistakes immediately after writing.

5- How keen are you to use PF technique in writing classes?

S: I think, in order to become a successful writer, you must use the PF technique. Not using it will lead you to maintain the same level of writing. So I am so keen to use it.

6- What advantages and disadvantages do you think PF has?

S: A disadvantage is that when two students with different proficiency levels work together, the lower student might feel somewhat disappointed because he might not have the ability to criticise the other student's work. But when two students with the same proficiency level work together, they will feel helpful and, thus, satisfied.

The advantages are that there is no barrier between you and your friend, so, you accept his criticism and he accepts yours. In addition, you apply what you learn, as opposed to neglecting what teachers say in the old method.

7- Do you prefer giving and receiving FB based on *macro* & *micro* levels? Or just one level? Why?

S: Both levels. Because I believe that focusing on one level is the reason that led to the deterioration of our essays in the past. The previous teachers used to focus on the micro level and neglect the macro level. For example, when you put a huge effort in to writing a great essay at a macro level, the teacher comes and punishes you for making a spelling mistake and does not appreciate your effort. On the other hand, a student submits an essay with very simple sentences and is horrible at the macro level but great at the micro level, he or she gets a high mark.

8- Did you use, ignore or reject any of the received feedback? Why?

S: I reject the comments related to personal opinions, when they are not convincing to me. But when the comment is related at the micro level, I accept it. I accept around 80% of the received FB. The other percentage, the remaining 20%, is related to personal opinions. I rarely ignore comments.

9- Do you have any recommendations for improving the way PF is used?

S: This technique is highly successful but there is a need for assigning two students who are at the same proficiency level.

10- Do you think peer feedback should continue to be used in future classes? Can you explain why?

S: If this technique had been used since high school till now, we would have acquired better writing skills; we would have been able to do research since the first year of college.

Student 9: (No. 33)

1- How do you feel about writing? Can you explain why?

S: I feel it's a chance to write in a different language, so it is a good thing.

T: So, do you describe your feeling as positive or negative?

S: Positive because I need it to learn about people and other cultures and so on. In addition, we learn to write and read at the same time. Also, it can help us in the future in having jobs and so on.

2- To what extent do you want to learn writing? Can you explain how, giving examples?

S: Well, my writing is not that good. I do have some problems, especially in spelling. Therefore, I am trying to improve my writing and, with this new technique you introduced (PF), I learned new things, such as my mistakes.

3- Do you think your own writing changed as a result of PF?

S: Yes, in some points. For example, if I make a mistake, my friend can come and explain it to me so I understand it. With teachers we usually fear to talk to them.

T: How do you think it changed?

S: Well, I used to have problems in the writing courses, with different doctors (teachers) and I failed them a few times. I only passed it when the doctor started allowing other students to provide FB to each other. However, the way we used it wasn't as well designed as the way you are doing it now.

T: Can you describe the difference between both ways?

S: The other teacher used a very normal way; he asked one student to write an essay and made several copies, then passed it to other students and asked all the students to identify any problems.

T: Were you provided with training? An evaluation checklist?

S: None, of any kind. We were asked to find problems without allowing us to justify our reasons for highlighting these problems. Even though this technique was not properly designed, I benefited from it.

T: How many times did you receive FB?

S: I recall two times in the whole semester. It was voluntary, if you didn't want to do it, then you didn't have to. We were required to write one essay during the whole semester and the PF • was voluntary.

T: Did the teacher provide you with any sort of FB?

S: No, not really. He only commented on some common mistakes, addressing this to the whole class.

T: And what was it about PF that led to those changes?

S: Receiving comments on different aspects, such as possessives • spelling...etc.

T: Is there anything about the technique that led to the changes?

S: Well, giving and receiving FB by itself is beneficial. Because we did our best to help each other, I think this is a great thing.

4- How do you feel about PF? Can you explain why?

S: Great feeling. At the beginning I couldn't accept the idea of PF because I thought it was too much work. However, after we experienced it, I found it interesting; I became very motivated to participate and submitted my papers on time. I also felt comfortable with it because I learnt from my colleagues but I am still not sure about the reliability of the received information.

5- How keen are you to use the PF technique in writing classes?

S: Well, this technique is great and I am very keen to use it at all times. I even used it in overcoming some difficulties in other exams and it helped. In other words, I improved in other courses because of PF. For example, when writing

essays for other exams, I used to order ideas in sequence as in: first, second, third...etc., but now, after being advised by a colleague, I started using more academic words like: moreover, however, therefore...etc.

6- What advantages and disadvantages do you think PF has?

S: The advantage is that it gave me new information. However, the disadvantage is that you can never be sure whether the information is reliable or not. The other student may explain that he is sure about the information but I don't have a proper justification, I, therefore, become hesitated to use it.

7- Do you prefer giving and receiving FB based on *macro* & *micro* levels? Or just one level? Why?

S: Both levels, of course. Because some students don't have the ability to critique at the macro level, I teach him what is necessary so he can give comments in the future.

8- Did you use, ignore or reject any of the received feedback? Why?

S: I refused some comments because I believed that my writing was correct and the comment is not responding to my writing; probably because he didn't understand the message I was intending to deliver in my writing. I don't have any problem with a micro level of FB but changing a complete sentence, which he didn't understand, I can't accept this. In addition, I recall, ignoring one or two comments with no reason for this. Perhaps I didn't want any more mistakes.

9- Do you have any recommendations for improving the way PF is used?

S: I think it is a nice, perfect, technique but how reliable is the information given by my colleague? We need justifications for every received FB. For instance, I remember one of my teachers taught me that for example • placed between

commas, yet my colleague said it should be preceded with a period and followed by a comma. So which one should accept? It is really confusing.

10- Do you think peer feedback should continue to be used in future classes? Can you explain why?

S: Without a doubt I recommend it. I see that in most previous writing courses, we've been asked to write an essay to submit and then the doctor becomes upset towards us, showing his dissatisfaction ...etc. I think this is because there are too many mistakes; he starts ignoring most of the mistakes and points out the clearest ones. Sometimes, you write an essay and submit it and feel afraid to speak to him, or discuss anything related to your paper. However, PF gives you the soothing feeling of discussing with your friends, with no barriers.

Student10: (No. 34)

1- How do you feel about writing? Can you explain why?

S: I have the same feeling as writing in Arabic. Although, there are some factors which make me feel a little bad about it because I am more capable of writing in Arabic than English. These factors are like weaknesses in vocabulary and fluency. All of these are causing some disappointment, when compared to L1. Overall, my feeling about writing in English is good.

2- To what extent do you want to learn writing? Can you explain how, giving examples?

S: To the highest level as I am planning to write a novel, firstly in Arabic and then in English. I think writing has its own method, students sometimes forget the structure of the essay and forget to produce topic sentences supported by examples. After they receive the final exam, they start regretting why they didn't do this or that.

3- Do you think your own writing changed as a result of PF? How do you think it changed?

S: I think it has improved a lot. Sometimes, when my friend corrects me, I discover new things I was not aware of before. So I learn from this and keep it in mind all the time. In addition, when I provide FB to my colleagues, I discover new things in writing, for instance, new ways of using cohesive ties and new ways of using adding clarifications to topic sentences. In the past the doctor didn't have time to provide 60 students with FB in a reasonable way. So this technique allows students to discover up to 50% of their own mistakes.

T: You mentioned something about the past FB. How many essays did you write and receive FB on?

S: I recall writing around an essay or two over the whole semester, none of which I received any FB on, just a grade. We couldn't learn our mistakes by receiving any sort of FB and this was a much encountered problem.

T: What was it about PF that led to those changes?

S: The fact that the FB is received in a reasonable time, around 2 days, allows you to remember what you wrote and, therefore, discuss the received FB properly. Unfortunately, some teachers provided us with FB after two weeks or so, by then we had almost forgotten everything and become not sure whether the essay I wrote was mine or not. Of course, this was in the case where we received FB from the teacher.

4- How do you feel about PF? Can you explain why?

S: I think it is a good technique because I really benefit from it. In past writing courses, before we enrolled in this course, if the teacher asked us to write an essay, we became shocked and unable to write at the beginning. This was because we were not used to practising writing.

5- How keen are you to use PF technique in writing classes?

S: Very keen to use it because it benefits us in a great way. The FB is received in a relatively proper time, about two days.

6- What advantages and disadvantages do you think PF has?

S: It has a lot of advantages. We can solve our problems in a quick way. It helps us to write, improve our vocabulary capacity, improves the structure of our sentences and essays. It allows self-development. It connects us with writing.

I don't think there are any disadvantages, up to now.

7- Do you prefer giving and receiving FB based on *macro* & *micro* levels? Or just one level? Why?

S: Both ways. Some students focus on the micro level and neglect the macro level. And other students are doing it the other way.

8- Did you use, ignore or reject any of the received feedback? Why?

S: I used them all without ignoring or rejecting any comments. I used them all because the FB was really pointing out my mistakes.

9- Do you have any recommendations for improving the way PF is used?

S: No.

10- Do you think peer feedback should continue to be used in future classes? Can you explain why?

S: It has to be used as an essential part of the curriculum because FB helps students to discover his mistakes and develop his writing skills. If a student

knows that he will be receiving FB on his work, he will have the motivation to do his best in writing the essay.

Student 11: (No. 35)

1- How do you feel about writing? Can you explain why?

S: I prefer writing in English in a constant manner. In this department we need to learn and the best way to learn, I believe, is writing. I prefer that writing should be involved in all courses on a daily/weekly basis. Unfortunately, we only write during examinations. The main reason for students becoming weak in writing is the lack of writing practice.

2- To what extent do you want to learn writing? Can you explain how, giving examples?

S: To a high extent. If I practise writing every day, my writing will improve. I prefer writing.

3- Do you think your own writing changed as a result of PF? If so, how do you think it changed?

S: Yes, it has improved a lot. In the past I used to write without paying attention to organisation and other macro features but now, because of PF, this was pointed out by a colleague, which enabled me to overcome this problem. My colleagues also pointed out some other important things, such as including the thesis statement at the beginning and many other things. PF has benefited me a lot this semester.

T: And what was it about PF that led to those changes?

S: Well, receiving FB, on a micro level, improved my writing. In addition, when my colleague explains to me my mistakes, I tend to learn more. I benefited from my colleague in every aspect in writing.

4- How do you feel about PF? Can you explain why?

S: I think PF is so great. When we write we don't tend to care about our writing but when our colleague reads it, we benefit.

5- How keen are you to use PF technique in writing classes?

S: I am very keen to use it, especially if my colleague is very keen to use it too. His keenness makes me keener to use it. Unfortunately, some students are not interested in using it, therefore, they don't pay much attention to your essay; as a result you don't pay much attention either. This can be somewhat negative.

6- What advantages and disadvantages do you think PF has?

S: The advantages are so many. For example, it helps improve your writing; you learn and benefit from your colleagues' opinions; you build relationships with others. Regarding the disadvantages, I only can think of one, which is the waste of time.

T: How many essays did you write in the past? And how much FB did you receive?

S: We used to write around two to three essays in the course, which had no FB at all. The only FB we used to have was the general FB given by the teacher, addressed to the whole class though individual FB was not seen.

7- Do you prefer giving and receiving FB based on *macro* & *micro* levels? Or just one level? Why?

S: On two levels, to be more beneficial.

8- Did you use, ignore or reject any of the received feedback? Why?

S: I refused some comments because the comments appeared wrong to me, it could be correct but I thought of them as wrong. I also remember ignoring one or two comments, for no reason. So over all, I accepted around 70% of the received comments and refused and rejected around 30%.

9- Do you have any recommendations for improving the way PF is used?

S: I recommend that each course include a writing activity, which includes FB, with individual FB. Some of the FB we received was pointed out individually, by some doctors, in a general way; for example, you have a problem with the language/ grammar...etc. • there was no specific example.

I think the current PF is good enough and doesn't need any improvement.

10- Do you think peer feedback should continue to be used in future classes? Can you explain why?

S: Yes, of course. My writing skills have improved a lot since using this technique.

Post-interviews

Student name 1: (No. 6)

1- How do you feel about writing? Can you explain why?

S: I have a great feeling; I prefer to write in English more than Arabic. I feel that I can deliver my message in English writing more than I can in Arabic.

- 2- To what extent do you want to learn writing? Can you explain how, giving examples?

S: To a great extent. If I have any chance to improve my writing, I will participate. I will do anything that will develop my writing skills. I also plan to produce published work.

- 3- Do you think your own writing changed as a result of PF? If so, how do you think it changed?

S: Yes of course, to a great extent. I have learnt more than one way in writing.

T: What was it about PF that led to those changes?

S: Changing colleagues in each session. I have been working with a highly proficient student, looking at other colleagues' essays and receiving FB from the teacher on the micro level.

- 4- How do you feel about PF? Can you explain why?

S: I have a great feeling. I receive the comments and accept them, even if they don't make me feel comfortable because this is the way to improve my writing.

- 5- How keen are you to use PF technique in writing classes?

S: I am very keen to use it. It's great to receive FB from different people so that you have to go back and write a second draft. In the past I used to write essays as a single draft.

- 6- What advantages and disadvantages do you think PF has?

S: There are so many advantages: it allows for the removal of unnecessary information from the essay; gain new information by looking at your colleagues' essays; learn new vocabulary and learn how others structure their sentences. I don't think there are any disadvantages.

- 7- Do you prefer giving and receiving FB based on *macro* & *micro* levels? Or just one level? Why?

S: Both levels because they are closely related.

T: Which of the two phases do you prefer?

S: In the first phase it was difficult to focus on the two levels. This is why I had to read it twice so, over the first time, you pay attention at the micro level, then in the second at the macro level. In addition, during the first phase, we used to receive unreliable FB.

In the second phase, we were allowed to stay focused on one level and discussed important aspects of writing. In addition, it consumes less time than before. Furthermore, teacher FB is reliable.

- 8- Did you use, ignore or reject any of the received feedback? Why?

S: I used around 95% because they were convincing and justified. I rejected around 3% because it was about the style and each individual has his own way of writing. I ignored maybe once or twice because they were not convincing.

- 9- Do you have any recommendations for improving the way PF is used?

S: I suggest changing peers in each session because you will learn from a higher proficient student and help lower level students.

- 10- Do you think peer feedback should continue to be used in future classes? Can you explain why?

S: I strongly recommend it because there are so many advantages to this technique. You look at your essay twice and you receive FB.

Student name 2: (No. 10)

1- How do you feel about writing? Can you explain why?

S: I think of it as a good thing, I like it but it doesn't have any other advantage over any other language.

2- To what extent do you want to learn writing? Can you explain how, giving examples?

S: To the fullest, to master every aspects of writing. I am planning to pursue my higher studies abroad and improving my writing skills will contribute to improving my English language in general and to writing skills in specific.

3- Do you think your own writing changed as a result of PF? If so, how do you think it changed?

S: It has improved a lot. In the past we used to write essays and receive a grade, if FB was applied, it would be around one or two aspects. However, here in PF sessions your colleague points out every single error. So, my writing has improved around 80%. I even went through some old writings and noticed that they have a very poor style; there were no uses of cohesive ties and so on.

T: What was it about PF that led to those changes?

S: The relaxed feeling you get when working with your colleague. With the teacher, we usually fear him and, as a result, you don't feel you can seek further clarification. Whereas, with colleagues you feel free to discuss, negotiating with no tension.

4- How do you feel about PF? Can you explain why?

S: At the beginning I was worried but with passing time, I realise that there is nothing to be afraid of. On the contrary, I have found that it is an excellent technique and should be applied in a separate course (module).

5- How keen are you to use PF technique in writing classes?

S: Very keen to use it because it is so beneficial.

6- What advantages and disadvantages do you think PF has?

S: The advantages are the improvement in writing skills. The disadvantages are that, sometimes, you can never be sure about the reliability of the given FB; you might know it's correct but can't provide a proper justification for it.

7- Do you prefer giving and receiving FB based on *macro* & *micro* levels? Or just one level? Why?

S: Both levels.

T: Which of the two phases do you prefer?

S: Well, in the first phase we were distracted, we couldn't point out most of the mistakes. During the second phase, I had the chance to pay more attention to the essays and provide more FB, supported with detailed justifications. As a result, there were more learning.

8- Did you use, ignore or reject any of the received feedback? Why?

I used a lot, around 95% because they were convincing. I rejected and ignored very few comments because they were not convincing.

9- Do you have any recommendations for improving the way PF is used?

S: Yes, I suggest having a session on macro FB and the following session on micro FB.

10- Do you think peer feedback should continue to be used in future classes? Can you explain why?

S: Yes because it's a great technique that points out your mistakes. It's like looking at a mirror; your colleague is like the mirror who points out your faults.

Student 3: (No.11)

1- How do you feel about writing? Can you explain why?

S: It is an important aspect at this time. It is essential to become fully aware of proper writing.

2- To what extent do you want to learn writing? Can you explain how, giving examples?

S: Now, of course, I want to learn more than ever and on a continuous basis. I find it difficult to produce academic papers, due to the lack of practice. This is the way I feel I want to improve my writing.

3- Do you think your own writing changed as a result of PF? If so, how do you think it changed?

S: Of course. It has improved a lot. In the past I didn't tend to revise my writing but now I revise everything before submission.

T: What do you mean by revision?

S: I mean I revise the mistakes that were pointed out by my colleagues and double check everything. This is because my work is going to be commented on by a peer.

T: What other improvements did you notice?

S: I began to pay more attention to my writing.

T: What was it about PF that led to those changes?

S: Writing the second draft, paying more attention to the writing and considering colleagues' comments.

4- How do you feel about PF? Can you explain why?

S: I have a good feeling; it is a wonderful experience because I can express myself more, with help from the received comments.

5- How keen are you to use PF technique in writing classes?

S: Very keen to use it, as long as I plan to improve my writing through the received comments.

6- What advantages and disadvantages do you think PF has?

S: Advantages: I began to revise my work; pay more attention to the writing; get an idea of how others are writing; the interaction between peers widens knowledge. These advantages haven't been seen before.

I believe there are no disadvantages.

7- Do you prefer giving and receiving FB based on *macro* & *micro* levels? Or just one level? Why?

S: Of course on two levels, so the learners can benefit more.

T: Which of the two phases do you prefer? Why?

S: The first, when we gave and received FB on two levels. So the FB can be comprehensive.

8- Did you use, ignore or reject any of the received feedback? Why?

I used over 50%; rejected around 10% because it was about ideas in my writing and felt that my colleague didn't understand them as I intended them to be. I ignored around 25% because the comments were not supported by proper justifications.

9- Do you have any recommendations for improving the way PF is used?

S: No.

10- Do you think peer feedback should continue to be used in future classes? Can you explain why?

S: Of course, because it is an effective factor for improving writing skills.

Student 4: (No. 12)

1- How do you feel about writing?

S: The same as before but now I am more confident in the structure than before.

T: Can you explain why?

S: The more you write and different opinions you get, it allows you to get to know your style and weaknesses.

2- To what extent do you want to learn writing? Can you explain how, giving examples?

S: To a great extent. I believe it's the only way to get your opinion out there.

3- Do you think your own writing changed as a result of PF? If so, how do you think it changed?

S: Yeah, definitely. This was because the words I use, the length of the sentences and the coherence has changed a lot.

T: What was it about PF that led to those changes?

S: I think it was the openness, the honesty. When you have your audience, not the teacher, telling you that you need to write less, to be consistent....etc. it makes it easier for you to accept what comments they gave because they are your target. Especially when there are no grades, no tension between both parties, nothing to gain or lose; it's not like the evaluator has around 50 papers to mark, he just has your paper to work on. It is very friendly information.

4- How do you feel about PF? Can you explain why?

S: I like it, I really do. It's more helpful than quickly marking my paper, saying I have an error in grammar or something, he sits with you and discusses your problems. It builds confidence and teaches you more about other people, about their culture and so on. It also helps to build character. It also helps to provide proper feedback and be more considerate.

5- How keen are you to use the PF technique in writing classes?

S: Very, very, keen. It is the only way to do it.

6- What advantages and disadvantages do you think PF has?

S: I don't think there is a downside to PF, other than the fact that a student may not be serious about it. The advantages: it's friendlier; easier, especially when students can contact each other anytime using the internet; you don't feel cheated, as the situation we find with the teacher. The teacher doesn't usually have time to explain everything to every single student. Yet, with PF, you can seek justifications and discuss them properly with your colleagues.

7- Do you prefer giving and receiving FB based on *macro* & *micro* levels? Or just one level? Why?

S: I prefer both because it's sometimes hard to differentiate between the two levels.

T: Which of the two phases do you prefer?

S: I find it harder to focus on one level for the same reason given before. Sometimes you see students writing and you think it's very bad on the micro level, when you are only supposed to give him FB on the macro level. So you feel that you haven't done your part, you didn't really help him. I mean it's peer to peer and you are supposed to help him, not just clocking your hours and leaving, you feel you didn't do your best in evaluating him.

8- Did you use, ignore or reject any of the received feedback? Why?

S: I used all of the comments, except one, which was a comment saying that my style was too passionate. It's not that I ignored it or didn't like it, I have it in mind but I thought of it as subjective. In other words, I tend to ignore it subconsciously. I am still working on it but haven't achieved it yet.

9- Do you have any recommendations for improving the way PF is used?

S: No.

10- Do you think peer feedback should continue to be used in future classes? Can you explain why?

S: Yes, I believe so because the student-professor ratio is too high, especially in our college, the college of humanities. In classes of 50 students, the students have to interact with each other in order to develop. Not to mention, in writing, where it seems impossible for the teacher to grade each single student.

Finally, it's been fun and something I didn't expect from a writing course.

Student name 5: (No. 19)

1- How do you feel about writing? Can you explain why?

S: I enjoy writing in English, I like the English language and I dream of becoming a distinguished writer in English.

2- To what extent do you want to learn writing? Can you explain how, giving examples?

S: To the furthest extent. I want to be able to do research and write published articles.

3- Do you think your own writing changed as a result of PF? If so, how do you think it changed?

S: Of course, 100% sure. It improved to a great extent.

T: What was it about PF that led to those changes?

S: My colleagues' comments on my writing, associated with justification.

4- How do you feel about PF? Can you explain why?

S: I prefer it because I can benefit from it more.

5- How keen are you to use the PF technique in writing classes?

S: I am very keen to use it because it can help me in the future, when writing academic texts.

6- What advantages and disadvantages do you think PF has?

S: There are so many advantages. For example, it improves grammar; it is beneficial and helps to improve your essay. I don't think there are any disadvantages.

7- Do you prefer giving and receiving FB based on *macro* & *micro* levels? Or just one level? Why?

S: On both levels because we are in higher education and we should receive it this way.

T: Which of the two phases do you prefer?

S: Both phases are acceptable.

8- Did you use, ignore or reject any of the received feedback? Why?

S: I used around 70% because they were convincing. Around 10% were ignored because I was not satisfied with them. Around 20 % were rejected because they were not convincing.

9- Do you have any recommendations for improving the way PF is used?

S: No.

10- Do you think peer feedback should continue to be used in future classes? Can you explain why?

S: Of course because it is very beneficial for the students.

Student name 6: (No. 20)

1- How do you feel about writing? Can you explain why?

S: I love writing in English. I find it easier to write in English than in Arabic.

2- To what extent do you want to learn writing? Can you explain how, giving examples?

S: As much as I can. I wish to publicise my own work in the future.

3- Do you think your own writing changed as a result of PF? If so, how do you think it changed?

S: I've seen a difference in my writing. Out of ten, I was five and now I see myself as a seven. I think this is a reasonable improvement in such a short period.

T: What was it about PF that led to those changes?

S: Looking at other colleagues' essays and changing peers, from time to time, gave me the motivation to become more enthusiastic about improving my writing skills by imitating good peers.

4- How do you feel about PF? Can you explain why?

S: It is beneficial; it encourages students to learn, encourages interaction between the students and saves time.

5- How keen are you to use PF technique in writing classes?

S: I think it should be compulsory in writing courses.

6- What advantages and disadvantages do you think PF has?

S: The advantages are: it gives you a chance to see how others are writing; learn from their styles and learn from the criticism you give and receive. The disadvantages are found when those around you are not interested in using it, the comments you receive are not beneficial.

7- Do you prefer giving and receiving FB based on *macro* & *micro* levels? Or just one level? Why?

S: I think the macro level has the priority because you are always interested in the content. It is also good to see a piece of writing which is good at the micro features. So, to answer your questions, I prefer receiving FB from my colleagues on two levels.

T: Which of the two phases do you prefer?

S: I prefer the first phase. However, I believe that you can get confused when there are too many comments or they can disappoint the receiver. This should be taken into consideration.

T: Are there any advantages of focusing on one level?

S: Yes, the student will produce an outstanding performance, where more attention is given and benefit is gained, such as change in style.

8- Did you use, ignore or reject any of the received feedback? Why?

S: I used around 95%. I ignored around 5% because I thought that the other student didn't understand the style I was using and didn't reject anything.

9- Do you have any recommendations for improving the way PF is used?

S: Yes, I suggest using PF at different intervals. In other words; two weeks using PF, two weeks using self-assessment and so on. So the student can learn to rely on himself. In addition, I suggest that the teacher comments on student FB. This should guide the learners to give proper FB.

10- Do you think peer feedback should continue to be used in future classes? Can you explain why?

S: Definitely, because it stimulates motivation to write and allows more participation.

Student name 7: (No. 26)

1- How do you feel about writing? Can you explain why?

S: I have an excellent feeling about it and feel that it is necessary. Every field depends on English language, even in daily needs.

2- To what extent do you want to learn writing? Can you explain how, giving examples?

S: To the furthest extent. After completing my college, I plan to go abroad to develop my language, including writing.

3- Do you think your own writing changed as a result of PF? If so, how do you think it changed?

S: Of course. In the past I used to write my essay directly, without any stimulation for the reader. In addition to the vocabulary, I learned new vocabulary by reading other essays.

T: What was it about PF that led to those changes?

S: Changing colleagues in PF sessions is one thing that led to my improvement. Every student has his own way of writing, so I benefitted from each one of them.

4- How do you feel about PF? Can you explain why?

S: I have felt satisfied with this technique and enthusiastic since the beginning of the semester. This is because I realised, from the beginning, that there would be plenty of practice.

5- How keen are you to use PF technique in writing classes?

S: I think it is an important and necessary technique to use.

6- What advantages and disadvantages do you think PF has?

S: There are so many advantages, such as: gaining new ways and styles of writing; improving vocabulary capacity; confirming uncertain things with colleagues. The disadvantages are: some students might become uncertain about some micro errors, so they either provide a wrong suggestion or neglect it and don't tend to point it out. Therefore, micro FB has to be given by the teacher.

7- Do you prefer giving and receiving FB based on *macro* & *micro* levels? Or just one level? Why?

S: Both levels but this will require more time to provide FB. If we focused on one level, this would save time and allow more time to be spent on a macro level, which is more important in writing. In addition, the macro PF will be more reliable.

8- Did you use, ignore or reject any of the received feedback? Why?

S: I used all the received FB.

9- Do you have any recommendations for improving the way PF is used?

S: I suggest changing the peer in each session and each time the new peer should be of a different proficiency level.

10- Do you think peer feedback should continue to be used in future classes? Can you explain why?

S: Definitely, because this technique helps to improve writing skills. In addition, it saves teacher's time, allowing students to write more and eventually receive FB. Finally, this is a new technique that has helped me and my colleagues to improve our writing.

Student name 8: (No. 29)

1- How do you feel about writing? Can you explain why?

S: It's a loved thing to me because one of my hobbies in English is to become fluent in writing and speaking.

2- To what extent do you want to learn writing? Can you explain how, giving examples?

S: To the extent that I will be able to attract the reader's attention. For example, when critiquing a social phenomenon, I want to be able to critique in a realistic way, not just by giving facts or general opinions.

3- Do you think your own writing changed as a result of PF? If so, how do you think it changed?

S: It has changed a lot. It has even affected the way I answer in other exams, which led to gaining better results.

T: What was it about PF that led to those changes?

S: Writing without stress and feeling relaxed during the process; receiving FB from colleagues.

4- How do you feel about PF? Can you explain why?

S: It is very beneficial because it improves your language and develops the critical sense.

5- How keen are you to use the PF technique in writing classes?

S: Using it is a factor for producing successful essays.

6- What advantages and disadvantages do you think PF has?

S: There are several advantages: it makes you feel satisfied about your writing; improves your writing skills; makes you accept other's opinions; change in the general atmosphere in our learning style that you learn from the teacher and it improves your evaluative skills and critical thinking.

The disadvantages include, when having two students of different levels, the lower student might feel disappointed because he couldn't locate any faults in the higher student's essay. Here, my reaction towards my linguistic level becomes negative. However, when the students are at the same level, they feel motivated to do more because they can provide comments.

7- Do you prefer giving and receiving FB based on *macro* & *micro* levels? Or just one level? Why?

S: Both levels.

T: Which of the two phases do you prefer?

S: The second phase because the micro FB is reliable. However, focusing on one level is better because it reduces the load and allows more attention to be paid to the macro level, which results in producing more constructive FB. It also allows more discussion, in order to deliver the message clearly. Furthermore, this allows a deeper analysis of the essays. Focusing on two levels can distract the evaluator and results in giving any unreliable comment, in order to balance the amount of comments.

8- Did you use, ignore or reject any of the received feedback? Why?

S: I used most of the micro comments and around 60% of the macro comments. I ignored around 20% because I thought that my idea was correct and his justification was not convincing. I rejected around 20% because we had completely different opinions about the idea.

9- Do you have any recommendations for improving the way PF is used?

S: No.

10- Do you think peer feedback should continue to be used in future classes? Can you explain why?

S: Certainly. Before doing any task, the writing skills have to be stimulated. Any job, to be accepted by the community, has to be produced professionally.

Student name 9: (No. 33)

1- How do you feel about writing? Can you explain why?

S: I am happy that I can write but I still have difficulties in particular areas. I believe this is caused by complications in my previous studies. Anyway, it's important that I can read and write.

2- To what extent do you want to learn writing? Can you explain how, giving examples?

S: I want to improve my writing in any way. If there were any sessions provided for improving writing skills, I would participate in them. The more I practise, the more I improve.

3- Do you think your own writing changed as a result of PF? If so, how do you think it changed?

S: PF has improved different things, especially on a macro level. After receiving several suggestions from my colleagues on how to organise the introduction, use cohesive ties, present my materials...etc. I felt the change in my writing. In the second phase, this semester, I became more focused on the macro features, which resulted in applying and transferring these features to other subjects.

T: What was it about PF that led to those changes?

S: Well, I feel more relaxed in the class with PF but with teacher FB I feel uncomfortable and worried about asking questions; can't seek further justification; fear of making mistakes; fear of receiving too much FB from the teacher, which would make me disappointed. In PF sessions, the discussion is friendlier; relationships grow stronger; we learn about other students and their writing skills. This is in addition to the fact that reading my classmates' essays and focusing on the macro level lead to changes in my writing.

4- How do you feel about PF? Can you explain why?

S: I have a great feeling, it helped me to realise my own mistakes and fix them.

5- How keen are you to use the PF technique in writing classes?

S: I really recommend using it because it can lead to some improvement in other modules.

6- What advantages and disadvantages do you think PF has?

S: There are so many advantages and I have explained them earlier. For example, PF improves writing skills; improves the speed of writing; helps you to learn about your own mistakes, feel more relaxed in the classroom and gain more information. The only disadvantage it has is the question of how reliable peer micro comments are. Mistakes in the macro level can be negotiated between peers and easily decided on.

7- Do you prefer giving and receiving FB based on *macro* & *micro* levels? Or just one level? Why?

S: It's good to them on both levels. However, there is a lot of pressure. Focusing on one level is more comfortable and I'd say beneficial. So, generally speaking, I prefer the second phase.

8- Did you use, ignore or reject any of the received feedback? Why?

S: I used around 70%. I ignored around 10%. I rejected around 10-15% because I provided my contrary point of view and the other party understood it. In addition, some of the comments required changes in my essay and I thought it would be detrimental to my writing. Furthermore, I didn't know how to incorporate these comments.

9- Do you have any recommendations for improving the way PF is used?

S: I recommend using PF on different levels. I mean, for a period of time we should focus on the macro level, then on the micro level, individually, then on both levels. This is to reduce the pressure on the students and to allow them to focus more on the writing features. This should result in paying more attention to and comprehending the material more.

10- Do you think peer feedback should continue to be used in future classes? Can you explain why?

S: Definitely. In previous modules we didn't have this technique and the teachers used to treat us as students with high proficiency levels, even though we were not. In addition, some of the teachers evaluate micro features and don't care for the macro information. Therefore, their evaluation is not fair.

Student name 10: (No. 34)

1- How do you feel about writing? Can you explain why?

S: I prefer writing in English, even more than Arabic.

2- To what extent do you want to learn writing? Can you explain how, giving examples?

S: To the fullest extent. To the extent that I can master other different types of essays (i.e., narrative, descriptive • tc.). I would also like to develop my critical thinking.

3- Do you think your own writing changed as a result of PF? If so, how do you think it changed?

S: Yes, in a great way. I've seen so many different styles in my colleagues' essays, different phrases. This led me to incorporate new materials into my essays.

T: What was it about PF that led to those changes?

S: Receiving FB from my colleague and reading colleagues' articles.

4- How do you feel about PF? Can you explain why?

S: This is a successful technique because the teacher can't cover 60 students with FB in each class due to time limitation.

5- How keen are you to use the PF technique in writing classes?

S: I will always be keen to use it because this is the first time I have discovered this technique to be successful. In the past giving FB was restricted to two random students on each essay. So we didn't benefit from a lot.

6- What advantages and disadvantages do you think PF has?

S: It has many advantages. I have begun to write smoothly, without wasting the time I used to before practising PF. There is no stress when writing and it feels friendlier, which results in better brainstorming and so on. I don't think there are any disadvantages.

7- Do you prefer giving and receiving FB based on *macro* & *micro* levels? Or just one level? Why?

S: Both levels, because focusing on two levels allows more FB and then better learning.

T: Which of the two phases do you prefer?

S: Both phases. So learners can learn more. Although focusing on one level has advantages, more focus is dedicated on the macro level, which should result in more learning and give more in-depth comments.

8- Did you use, ignore or reject any of the received feedback? Why?

S: I ignored one comment on the style of my writing because we disagreed on the point and I could not accept his point of view. I used all other comments.

9- Do you have any recommendations for improving the way PF is used?

S: I would suggest doing something about the reliability of the given PF.

10- Do you think peer feedback should continue to be used in future classes? Can you explain why?

S: I strongly recommend it because my writing has improved a lot. The speed of my writing has improved.

Student name 11: (No. 35)

1- How do you feel about writing? Can you explain why?

S: I have a great feeling because it's the target language and we can learn through writing and reading.

2- To what extent do you want to learn writing? Can you explain how, giving examples?

S: To a great extent. The more I write, the more I learn. When there is FB I can learn from my mistakes. I want to become able to critique an article.

3- Do you think your own writing changed as a result of PF? If so, how do you think it changed?

S: It has improved in a great way because there is FB and a correction of mistakes. In the past we used to write for exams with no FB but now we get FB every single time.

T: What was it about PF that led to those changes?

S: Peer comments and opinions. I think of these comments as beneficial.

4- How do you feel about PF? Can you explain why?

S: I like receiving PF, I prefer it. My objective in this college is to learn and PF allows me to learn from my mistakes by receiving PF.

5- How keen are you to use PF technique in writing classes?

S: Very keen to use it. I am also very keen to receive comments from my colleagues on my essays. I also prefer to receive FB from someone who is better than me at writing.

6- What advantages and disadvantages do you think PF has?

S: There are many advantages, for example, it improves writing skills and you benefit from other students' opinions. A disadvantage is that some of the students don't seem to be interested in this technique.

7- Do you prefer giving and receiving FB based on *macro* & *micro* levels? Or just one level? Why?

S: Both levels, to improve the essay on both levels.

T: Which of the two phases do you prefer?

S: I prefer the second phase because some students have weaknesses in grammar, do not care about grammar mistakes or are unaware of these features. Focusing on the macro level allows the evaluator to pay attention to the meaning correctly; to write a proper essay; doesn't make you feel distracted; gives more time for discussion, which leads to more improvement. In the first phase we didn't pay much attention to the meaning, we were mainly focussing on grammar and spelling. We used to receive and give very few comments.

8- Did you use, ignore or reject any of the received feedback? Why?

S: I used around 80% because they were justified and beneficial. I rejected some comments, say 10-15%, because they were not convincing and they were related to the style. Around 5-10% was ignored, which was related to micro issues because I was not sure about them and proper justification was not supported.

9- Do you have any recommendations for improving the way PF is used?

S: I suggest dedicating three hours a week, for weak students, to have group sessions using the PF technique. I also suggest that the FB is given by highly proficient students, not by the teachers, because some students have barriers between themselves and the teachers, they might fear to make a mistake in front of the teacher or don't like to hear from the teacher. On the other hand, with peers, students usually feel more relaxed and, thus, feel more comfortable to learn.

10- Do you think peer feedback should continue to be used in future classes? Can you explain why?

S: Of course, because it improves writing; gives FB; corrects everything and shows how proper writing is done.

1- How do you feel about writing? Can you explain why?

S: It is so very important, everything is done using English, all business documents are written in English. Therefore, writing in English becomes essential.

2- To what extent do you want to learn writing? Can you explain how, giving examples?

S: To be able to write as if in my mother-tongue. In other words, being able to write without spending so much time focusing on grammar, organisation and punctuation.

3- Do you think your own writing changed as a result of PF? If so, how do you think it changed? What was it about PF that led to those changes?

S: A lot. I began to avoid some previous mistakes I made in grammar. I began to avoid making mistakes subconsciously.

T: What was it about PF that led to those changes?

S: Pointing out problematic ideas. I mean, having peers suggest I reorder my written ideas.

4- How do you feel about PF? Can you explain why?

S: It is very important and beneficial. It allows self-improvement; the student starts to feel it by looking at their mistakes, after having them pointed out by a colleague at the same proficiency level. I mean, from a psychological factor, the feeling that the student gets when he has the decision of either accepting or rejecting peer comments, develops more enthusiasm towards learning. This is as opposed to teacher feedback, where we have to accept it.

5- How keen are you to use PF technique in writing classes?

S: Very keen to use it. Well, at the beginning I was not so keen to use it but, after practising it for a whole semester, I changed my mind completely. This is after I saw the results and the improvement in my writing. It really makes changes.

6- What advantages and disadvantages do you think PF has?

S: Advantages: it gives a feeling that the students have improved their writing by themselves.

Disadvantages: I could receive some incorrect FB; the other student may not have the ability to locate some of the mistakes.

7- Do you prefer giving and receiving FB based on *macro* & *micro* levels? Or just one level? Why?

S: In the beginning, I preferred to give FB on two levels (phase 1). However, not focusing on a macro level is preferred.

T: Why?

S: Because it allows the ideas to flow when I write; allows more focus on macro features, which is more important; we have the time produce more writing in an essay; I can focus on discovering new ways in developing my writing style. In other words, when I know that my colleague is not going to pay attention to micro features, I can concentrate and develop the macro. In the first phase I consumed so much time constructing each sentence, editing, double checking...etc. As a result, my writing tended to be brief and sometimes incomplete. In the second phase we felt free to express ourselves.

T: What are the advantages of focusing on the macro features?

S: It has the advantage that when the learner has strengths in macro writing and weaknesses in micro writing, they can show their creativity in writing, even if they have grammatical mistakes. Therefore, in the past, they were restricted by

their grammar weaknesses. In addition, in the second phase, when we gave feedback I felt more comfortable because we have moved on from the micro editing stage and focused on the more prestigious stage (the macro stage). The micro level seems to me, to be a beginner stage and here, as an advanced student, I feel that we should focus on the macro features. In giving feedback, I feel there is sufficient time to present my comments and discuss them with my colleague. In addition, focusing on the macro level develops the student's thinking and critical skills.

8- Did you use, ignore or reject any of the received feedback? Why?

S: I used around 50%; rejected around 50% because they were obviously wrong, or the other student did not have the ability to evaluate or his proficiency level was weaker. I never ignored any comment.

9- Do you have any recommendations for improving the way PF is used?

S: I think it is used properly and it should be used in all taught modules, in order to substitute the old teaching style.

10- Do you think peer feedback should continue to be used in future classes? Can you explain why?

S: I strongly advise using it for future classes because it allows self-improvement and the student feels that they have developed themselves by their self. It is not something they are spoon fed or forced to learn; they discover for themselves.
